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A
CRITICAL HISTORY
OF
ANIMAL MAGNETISM;

IN TWO PARTS:

By J. P. F. ^{DE}DELEUZE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

WITH NOTES,

BY

FRANCIS CORBAUX.

LONDON, 1816.

20913.

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BY

THE TRANSLATOR OF THIS WORK, AND EDITOR OF THE

MAGNETISER'S MAGAZINE.

THE prejudices existing in this country against the doctrine of ANIMAL MAGNETISM, which is now submitted again to public consideration,—however ill-founded and unjustifiable in sound reason, have been so extensively propagated, that an impartial investigation cannot take place until they are removed and their absurdity demonstrated, to the satisfaction of a class of men qualified for exerting a salutary influence over the opinions of the multitude. It is, therefore, with a view to accomplish this primary and essential object, that the present course of instruction is commenced by *Mr. DELEUZE's Critical History of Animal Magnetism*,—a work well calculated to render that success at least probable; and should it prove so, I indulge the hope of meeting, at some future period, the applause of such amongst my countrymen, whose judgment, in the pursuit of useful truth, is not to be biassed by the premature decisions of assuming ignorance.

The author has, for more than twenty years, belonged to the French Museum of Natural Sciences, in the capacity of a botanist; and has published, in its annals, historical accounts relative to the persons and labours of several who

were distinguished in that branch of knowledge, which accounts have since been translated—some into the English, and others into the German language. He is the author also of two memoirs, concerning Ornamental plants, which are alluded to by the *Abbé Delille*, in his celebrated poem “*Des trois Règnes de la Nature*”; * and is further known, in the

- * DELEUZE, au soin de l'art confiant la nature,
A ce luxe charmant invita la culture;
Signala tous ces plants qui, fiers de notre choix,
Viennent orner nos parcs et le jardin des rois.
Dans ce jardin fameux, capitale des plantes,
C'est lui qui, rassemblant leurs tribus différentes,
En de riches herbiers et de nombreux cartons,
Aux peuples végétaux assigne leurs cantons;
Aux familles d'Europe, aux races d'Amérique,
Il joint les nourrissons de la brûlante Afrique;
De leur riche peuplade heureux concitoyen,
L'archiviste de Flore en est l'historien;
Des arbres étrangers nous conte les voyages,
Et le hasard heureux qui les mit sur nos plages:
Chacun lui doit son rang, ses titres, ses honneurs,
Et son écrit charmant est le blason des fleurs.

Les Trois Règnes de la Nature.—Chant, VI.

TRANSLATION.

DELEUZE, through Art preserving Nature's reign,
Improv'd the culture of the grove and plain,—
Explain'd those plants which lov'd Gaul's genial springs,
And deck'd the splendid garden of her Kings:
In that fam'd palace, Flora's brightest seat,
He made the number of her tribes complete,
And in her Herbals gave to each a place
Of all her various vegetable race;
With those of Afric's and of Europe's skies
He mingled such as in Columbia rise,—

literary world, by a publication in two volumes, entitled "*Eudore, ou Entretiens sur l'étude des Sciences, des Lettres et de la Philosophie*"; a work which required the research and meditation of many years. Besides these original productions, he has given elegant translations in his own language, of two English works—*Thomson's Seasons* and *Darwin's Loves of the Plants*. On the return of Louis XVIII. in 1814, he was appointed one of the royal censors of the press; an office which was suppressed the following year, and has not been re-established. During five years, he was Secretary to the Philomatic Society; and, at the present moment, fills a similar office in the Society of Professors, in the museum before mentioned, of which he is a member. He is likewise vice-president of a Philanthropic Society, instituted for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of the poorer classes.

That public distinctions, like these, constitute a claim to general confidence and regard, no one will deny. But, great as they are, they will acquire no small extension when time shall have enabled us fully to appreciate the value of his Magnetical labours. It will then be seen, that M. Deleuze, animated by the most pure and disinterested motives, has devoted those labours for a long series of years to the amiable and benevolent object of promoting the happiness and welfare of mankind.

It was, indeed, while enjoying these numerous testimonies of public esteem, in the country to which he belongs,—and when he had so much personal reputation at stake, that

At once th' Historian, Registrar, and Sire,
Of all those beauties which her eyes admire;
Through Him of foreign trees we learn the name,
• Their natures, characters, and whence they came,—
Each owes to Him its honors, title, pow'r,
And his own page emblazons ev'ry flow'r.

M. Deleuze published, in the year 1813, the work which I now presume to translate.

No impartial person can think it probable that he would inconsiderately commit his name, as a man of science and of acknowledged superior understanding, by prostituting his literary talents in any cause unworthy of them; nor can it be supposed that his opinions were expressed in a moment of unguarded enthusiasm, for he informs us (in an introductory discourse) that, during the warmth of dispute on the subject of *Animal Magnetism*, he resolved to remain a silent observer,—and that it was only after having pursued his enquiries for a space of twenty-five years, that he determined to render this public homage to unquestionable truth.

M. Deleuze's work is not of such a description as to admit of its being only cursorily read: before the full force of reasoning, with which it abounds, can be inculcated into the mind of a person seriously desirous of real information, it will require more than one attentive perusal. When that is accomplished, it will be impossible for any man of common understanding to remain sceptical, as to the doctrine which it unfolds,—or to doubt that it deserved a more favourable reception, in England, than it has hitherto experienced; a reception which would have been secured, had it been presented in a proper light.

The first object pursued by the author is to establish the reality of Magnetical Action, together with its beneficial effects, according to those principles of historical criticism the infallibility of which are universally acknowledged in their application to matters of fact; and his enlightened disquisitions, duly weighed, ineontestably overthrow every argument advanced by the antagonists of that doctrine; while, at the same time, they shew the absurdity of attempting to renew,

at the present period, any of the objections formerly urged. The method he has followed renders this work more instructive than any other which has been published on the same subject. Keeping always within the strictest bounds of fair reasoning, yet displaying the greatest powers of logic in support of the cause he advocates, he never fails to pronounce a severe and pointed censure upon such writings as are infected with erroneous theoretical principles, or tainted in any degree with an exaggeration of facts; because those writings tend rather to injure than promote a good cause. So far from imitating those writers in the wanderings of their imagination, or from desiring to prove any thing more than is immediately necessary to support the doctrine he professes, he adopts the wise precaution of insisting upon such facts only as are daily reproduced, and prudently abstains from bringing forward others, which (however probable they may be) are too difficult to explain, in the present state of physical and physiological knowledge, or which are in apparent contradiction with generally admitted principles and notions. He is perfectly aware that it is the fate of truth, seldom to triumph on its first appearance; he is also sensible that a series of facts, of an extraordinary kind, ought to be developed gradually and according as the mind becomes disposed to receive them. Having made, in that respect, great allowances for the weakness of human nature, he has incurred the accusation of being too prudent, even by Magnetisers who have by no means been liable to the contrary reproach in their own publications; and it is, perhaps, no more than justice to observe, that in avoiding as much as possible to clash with the prejudices of his contemporaries, and to oppose their favourite notions, he has generally exhibited greater deference to the opinions of professional men than they were entitled to expect.

His book has converted to the doctrine of Animal Magnetism a great number who were sceptical, especially among the members of the *faculty*, by whom he is often consulted; and I am informed that he has lately been applied to, from high authority in France, for a plan of Magnetical process, to be executed in hospitals, under the direction of medical men. His long experience in the practice of Animal Magnetism, and his extensive knowledge in the several branches of Natural Science, together with the spirit of impartial inquiry which predominates through his whole work, have gained over thousands of proselytes to this doctrine, and removed the chief obstacles which had before opposed its propagation.

I shall abstain from offering here any analysis of Mr. Deleuze's work, as he has himself traced out his plan in the Introduction. Honoured with the friendship of so worthy a member of society, I have only to regret that my abilities are inadequate to the task of translating it, in such a manner as to do full justice to the original. I have been careful, however, to preserve the integrity of its substance; and where the expressions which he has used have appeared to be somewhat too elliptical for our language, especially upon a subject yet little understood in this country, I have ventured upon some extension of the text. I have perceived but very few errors, either in points of theory or of fact; and these (which I previously submitted to him) form the matter of some of my notes, which in other respects are intended to be as explanatory of the whole as I conceived might be necessary. He has been pleased to approve of them; and on this occasion, the unaffected modesty of a man of real and superior information was singularly contrasted with the presumptuous decisions of ignorance; while, at the same time, he displayed all the treasures of a liberal mind, and

those principles which entitle him to the greatest confidence on the part of his readers. He writes to me thus :

“ Si vous trouvez d’autres erreurs dans mon ouvrage, je vous
 “ serai obligé de les rectifier : la seule chose dans laquelle je desire
 “ que ma doctrine soit conservée, c’est ce qui est relatif à la direc-
 “ tion morale. Il faut qu’on sache que le Magnétisme n’est bon
 “ que dans les mains des gens de bien.—C’est un instrument de
 “ charité. Il seroit d’angereux entre les mains des hommes dont
 “ les mœurs ne sont pas pures,—dont les intentions ne sont point
 “ droites ;—il l’est aussi dans les mains des charlatans, et même
 “ des enthousiastes. Si vous veniez à bout de déterminer enfin les
 “ Anglais à examiner le Magnétisme, vous auriez rendu à cette
 “ Science bienfaisante le plus éminent de tous les services : les Al-
 “ lemands n’ont pas le même crédit en Europe, parcequ’on les
 “ croit plus susceptibles d’illusion : si cela prenoit en Angleterre,
 “ ce seroit tout autre chose. Cette découverte, qui a d’abord été
 “ proclamée en France, nous reviendra, comme tant d’autres, des
 “ pays étrangers, après avoir été pendant quelque temps proscrite
 “ chez nous. Est-il possible que ce dont il est si facile de se con-
 “ vaincre, et dont le résultat est si utile, éprouve tant de contra-
 “ diction ? Ne nous décourageons point : nous serons toujours
 “ récompensés par le bien que nous ferons. N’ayons pas plus
 “ d’orgueil, que nous n’avons d’intérêt pécuniaire.”

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

A

CRITICAL HISTORY

OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

INTRODUCTION.

IT has been observed, that truth is elicited by the collision of opinions; but this remark is more plausible than just. When the public mind is strongly agitated by any question, it is difficult to subject it to an impartial investigation: even the philosopher can scarcely avoid partaking of the prejudices which surround him; and, admitting that he maintains the coolness which discussion requires, he will not succeed in commanding attention. Neither calm reason, nor modest truth, can find a reception amidst the dazzling errors of the imagination. The history of every system proves this fact:—while each was fashionable, nothing could be cleared up respecting it; it was only when they ceased to be considered as of great importance that they could be compared, and that what was reasonable in each could be discriminated.

Hence I conceived it most proper to look on in silence, while the doctrine of Magnetism was a matter of warm debate on both sides: but now, when indifference appears to have superseded enthusiasm and party-spirit, I think it may be useful to recal attention to this subject, and therefore have determined to publish the result of my enquiries.

One consideration alone seemed to forbid this step. We al-

ready have, in support of *Magnetism**, collections of facts, digested by men whose rank in society, whose general estimation and well-established characters, place them above all suspicion of insincerity; and yet those writings produced but little sensation upon the generality of mankind. Can I flatter myself with greater success? Doubtless not;—but I shall have contributed my mite, and that will always constitute an additional testimony. If all those who, like myself, have prosecuted their enquiries during the last five and twenty years, had the courage to promulgate the truth, that mass of evidence, daily increasing, would soon become so considerable that no person could any longer presume to reject it without discussion.

It must be admitted, however, that the greater part of the works above alluded to cannot be beneficially read, except by persons who have already witnessed the facts, for they are not wholly exempt from exaggeration:—the principal phenomenon is seldom distinguished from its accessory circumstances; in some there are physical errors to be noticed, which an attentive mind can indeed separate from the rest, but the first impression of which is to remove confidence; finally, the authors of several of those works, instead of limiting themselves to ascertain and to reconcile the different facts, have endeavoured to explain them by systems resulting from enthusiasm, and not derived from a profound study of the various laws of nature, operating in living beings.

I have traced to myself a different course. I shall indulge in no hypothesis, but only relate what I have seen and what has been observed by men worthy of credit; I shall shew the consistency which subsists, between the experiments made at various times, in various countries, and by persons who differed in their opinions; I shall always suppose illusion to have existed, wherever it could possibly be so; I shall discuss some marvel-

* To avoid the frequent use of a compound expression, I shall continue throughout my book to employ the word *Magnetism* only, instead of *Animal Magnetism*.

ous circumstances, in order to ascertain whether they may not be rejected without shaking the reality of those phenomena with which they have been connected; I shall endeavour to find out what causes such phenomena may be owing to, or what points of resemblance they possess; lastly, I shall examine the objections which have been urged against Magnetism, and prove that some of them merely attack a vain theory and practices which have long been renounced, whilst all the others spring from an absolute ignorance of facts, daily reproduced, and which any person has it in his power to verify.

As I am persuaded that the works which have been published on the subject of Magnetism contain a collection of proofs which an unprejudiced mind cannot resist; and that those even of its antagonists support the truths which they attempt to controvert, I shall give a short analysis of such as it may be expedient to consult; pointing out, at the same time, what parts of them are most to be relied on. I shall further have to criticise those authors whose zeal has impelled them too far; being confident that they will approve my motives, and not be offended at my remarks. I may often be compelled to combat the opinion of learned men whom I highly esteem, and freely to mention the cause of their aversion to new doctrines. I find myself incorporated amongst them;—not from any pretension to the same talents and knowledge which they possess, but in consequence of my inclinations; not in the capacity of a master, but in that of a disciple. The advantage I have enjoyed, of an habitual intercourse with them, has taught me to hold in due regard the moral character of those who are occupied in the pursuit of true knowledge, and who—apart from worldly passions—cultivate the sciences in retirement; but I have nevertheless discovered, that if they are exempt from many prejudices which fall to the lot of other men, they sometimes entertain prejudices peculiar to themselves, arising from the too great latitude which they attribute to certain principles, and from a reluctance

to separate, in their minds, various opinions already admitted, so as to enable themselves the better to investigate new ones.

Notwithstanding that the question of motives to ereditibility has been often discussed by philosophers, and although I have investigated that question in a former publication (when speaking of the study of history*), I shall advert to a few principles relative to that subject. If the accuracy of those principles be admitted;—if it be acknowledged that I have not deviated from them; and if, in reading this book, it is thought proper to discriminate such facts respecting which there can have been no illusion, from such as may have been vitiated by enthusiasm, by ignorance, or by credulity, I shall then have obtained the utmost of my expectations.

I shall next trace the method which every one may adopt to convince himself, and shew the insufficiency of the means employed, by many who have manifested a desire to do so. I shall venture to offer some advice to Magnetisers, respecting the conduct which they ought to observe towards persons who wish to be informed, as also towards unbelievers. I am but too well acquainted with the dangers liable to be incurred in consequence of an inconsiderate zeal; and how painfully we may be undeceived, when we have flattered ourselves with making converts to our opinion by prematurely exhibiting extraordinary phenomena.

I shall point out wherein consists the utility of Magnetism, and also what its dangers might be;—further venturing to say, what should be thought concerning the association of several facts, of a surprising nature, with mystical doctrines;—and shall prove, that errors respecting points of natural philosophy, or wanderings of the imagination in a few individuals, are considerations of insufficient weight to invalidate the certainty of facts.

I may perhaps be reproached with having assumed a dogma-

* Eudoxus, vol. II. p. 125, et seq.

tical tone : but how was this to be avoided, when, in a doctrine encumbered with so many vague ideas, the attention was to be fixed upon a few essential principles, and these were to be separated from such as are either useless or doubtful? I do not disguise from myself that I am entering upon a path beset with difficulties; and nothing could have urged me to the undertaking, but a desire to be useful to mankind. In this, I have no personal advantage to contemplate, either in point of reputation, or any of those things much valued in this world. If I do not succeed in reclaiming the public mind, I cannot then escape the shafts of ridicule; and if I should succeed, the glory will not devolve to myself, but to those who have preceded me. I am even far from anticipating success:—if it do follow, it can only be at a distant period, and when I shall not witness it. A work written upon matters already exploded, however remarkable it might be for logical precision and elegance of style, would not change the public opinion. Truths rejected in the first instance, because imperfectly developed, are likely afterwards to meet with much greater difficulties in being received, than truths yet unknown; for they have not the privilege of exciting curiosity. The greater number of readers will consider the facts I shall assert as errors already confuted, and the reasonings I employ as founded upon an illusive system of metaphysics; but still I trust that a few are to be met with, who, satisfied with my sincerity and struck with the forcible proofs I have collected, will come to a determination of verifying those facts, by strictly following the method I trace out for that purpose; and doubtless the latter will acknowledge the benefit I shall have conferred upon them.

With respect to those intelligent and enlightened men, who have, on the subject, a settled opinion—which they would be unwilling to submit to any new discussion, I expect from their justice that they will abstain from pronouncing any decision, if they have not sufficient leisure to give me their attention. The reception which my preceding publication has met with

may afford some proof of my not being wholly unacquainted with the proper forms of methodical reasoning; and that, without possessing profound knowledge, I am at least sufficiently initiated in the general principles of science, thoroughly to feel when a fact appears in contradiction with what is already known. When, therefore, I find myself compelled to admit facts of such a description, it is not from ignorance, but from conviction, after reiterated examination and mature reflection. I shall not enquire into the cause of primitive facts, but confine myself to ascertaining them, and producing a theory whereby they will be connected, although perhaps unexplained;—submitting to the judgment of all those who, after having taken the trouble to make experiments in the manner I have pointed out, may be entitled to form an opinion of their own.

It would be desirable for me that this treatise should remain entirely unknown, to all who are not likely to make any use of it, and especially to those who may not have leisure to read it through: certain detached parts would only tend to excite very false notions of what I have to disclose on the subject, which is only to be judged in the aggregate. Some principles, which at first sight may appear strange, will cease to do so after they are explained and set in a proper light: even the full force of the proofs collected in the *First* part, can only be felt after the *Second* has been read,—where an investigation of the principal publications existing on the subject of Magnetism leads me to that of testimonies and opinions*.

If this book should fall into the hands of a wife, afflicted at beholding her suffering husband;—of a mother, whose daughter is in a declining state;—of any one desirous to relieve a friend;—of a wealthy inhabitant of the country, to whom the poor resort for aid and advice, concerning their health, it may be worth their while to try the means which I suggest. I do not posi-

* I hope that the *Second* part will justify the title which I have given to my work.

tively affirm that their first attempts shall be successful to the full extent of their wishes ; but I promise, even then, that they will materially alleviate those sufferings which they may not entirely remove ;—I can affirm, that their conviction will become stronger from day to day, and that their cares, thus silently bestowed, will be remunerated by an additional energy in the ties of friendship, and perhaps by a happy consciousness of having restored health to a mother, a wife, a friend, or some unfortunate fellow-creature. I do not advise that this method should be tried, in any other cases than those in which the usual medical means do not appear of urgent necessity,—when these have proved unavailable, or else when the proceedings of physic and those of Magnetism can be associated.

Such cases do not unfrequently happen ; and what danger is to be incurred by so doing ?—With proper caution, no injury can possibly arise from it. If numerous testimonies be still inadequate to demonstrate, beyond a doubt, the efficacy of Magnetism, they ought at least to serve as an inducement to sacrifice a few hours in the attempt to do good. Nothing is more easy, *if we know how to WILL it* (¹).



A
CRITICAL HISTORY
OF
ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

THE FIRST PART.

CHAPTER I.

*Of the discovery of Magnetism,—its publication, propagation,
and the obstacles opposed to it.*

THE action of ANIMAL MAGNETISM on the human nerves,—its application in the cure of diseases, and the greater part of the phenomena which it produces, have been noticed in all ages. Many authors have described, and endeavoured to account for them; but their descriptions are mingled with absurd details, and their explanations are founded either upon physical errors, or upon superstitious opinions. Nor ought we to be surprised at this; for they employed Magnetism without being conscious of doing so, and never attempted to refer to one single cause the effects produced by this agent,—to discriminate what belonged to it, from that which depended on adventitious circumstances, or to inform mankind that they could give it such a direction as to make it instrumental in assuaging our sufferings, and curing disorders incidental to the human frame. The observations of *Mesmer* led him to this result; and to him, therefore, we are truly indebted for the knowledge of Magnetism.

Mesmer. That extraordinary man, gifted with an energetic temper, a contemplative mind, and a powerful imagination, was struck

with certain phenomena which could not result from the known laws of physiology. Making experiments, with a view to penetrate the cause of those phenomena, he succeeded in reproducing them; and he discovered, in man, the faculty of acting upon the organs of his fellow-creatures, by means very simple in themselves, but the efficacy of which depended upon the energy of volition in the person applying them. He incorporated his observations with a theory, which perhaps originated only in his own fancy, or which he may have partly derived from some works not generally known. His repeated success gave him an exaggerated idea of his power, and that idea had the effect of increasing his natural faculties. He then believed that the principle which he had discovered was the universal agent of nature; and that, by directing its application according to a certain process which he had adopted, he should be able to cure diseases of every kind, and even to exercise a great influence on the social condition of man. The cures which he performed astonished those who witnessed them, and they soon excited an enthusiasm which gave birth to the most delusive pretensions. On the other hand, the relation of supposed miracles provoked the hostility of unbelievers; who, unwilling to inquire into facts which wore the appearance of absurdity, attacked the new doctrine, sometimes with argument, sometimes with ridicule, and sometimes with all the vehemency of party spirit.

It must be confessed, that when the process of Magnetism was first applied in a public manner, reflecting men were partly justified in considering as fabulous the phenomena which were related. Those phenomena were accompanied by circumstances so incredible, while they who extolled them ascribed the same to principles so opposite to physical and physiological laws, that it was not surprising if enlightened men should disdain to notice the subject: besides, among the facts stated in support of the doctrine of Magnetism, not only there were several which did not prove what was asserted, but several also, the falsity of

which was actually demonstrated. Some patients, who were said to have been cured, were not really so ; and others, told of their cures, who never had any complaints but nervous ones, which imagination had produced, and which imagination might also have instantly dispelled. Some Magnetisers promised effects which they did not realise ; and afterwards, stimulated by enthusiasm, they maintained that they had produced them. Many persons saw prodigies in things where other witnesses more cool and enlightened, saw nothing deserving of attention. In addition, the process applied to the sick was accompanied with practices, some of which were puerile and insignificant, and others dangerous ; while the exaltation of mind was so great, that there was reason to fear every species of extravagance might be indulged. To complete the whole, the theory of Magnetism was associated with a sort of occult philosophy, which, so far as it could be understood, was contrary to notions generally admitted, and even to the principles of sound physical science.

Notwithstanding all this, Mesmer had, for a long time, solicited an examination of his doctrine ; he requested, even, that he should be permitted to prove, by comparative experiments, the superior advantages of his method of cure, over that of the *faculty*. The number of his partizans daily increased ; and unprejudiced men, believing that there might be, in the doctrine, some truth intermixed with errors, waited for further information to determine their opinion.

Things were in this state, when the French Government thought proper to submit the question of Magnetism to the investigation of the Academy of Sciences, of the Faculty, and of the Royal Medical Society.

The commissioners appointed by these public bodies were men no less recommendable for their knowledge, than for their integrity ; but they were prepossessed to such a degree against the doctrine of Magnetism, that they did not condescend to enquire into the facts which were adduced in its support. They made their observations, as if merely to fulfil a task ; but

they conducted their experiments in the same manner as they would have done, to verify the phenomena of mineral Magnetism, or of Electricity; a course of conduct, which, as I shall hereafter prove, could not in any way enlighten them upon the subject. They saw, indeed, some surprising cures,—some singular crises; but did not attribute them to the agent whose discovery had been announced, and they declared Magnetism therefore to be nothing.

It is probable they may have discovered a real action; but, according to their conception of the matter, an application of this new agent was liable to so many inconveniences, and the belief in its existence might produce so many follies, that it was better to withdraw the public mind from it, rather than permit it to enter upon a path the termination of which could not be perceived. Perhaps they even judged that the discovery of Magnetism could not be lost; and that, in order for it to produce salutary results, it would be best to cultivate it deliberately and in silence; waiting for a period when, the exaltation of the mind having subsided, there would no longer be any danger of its being abused. Such, in my opinion, were the causes of the decision delivered by the commissioners. It was complained of, at the time, that they went to make their observations at the house of M. D'Eslon, instead of that of M. Mesmer: such a proceeding was indeed irregular; but I do not pretend to draw any inference from this circumstance,—nor is it worth while to do so.

Scarcely had the physicians and men of science pronounced Magnetism to be a chimerical thing, than the discovery itself was pursued with ridicule. They denied the existence of those facts which were best attested; they treated those who witnessed them as enthusiasts; Mesmer was overwhelmed with the grossest abuse; he and his partizans were personated upon the public stage; the Faculty of Physic prohibited its members from employing those methods which had thus been condemned; they expunged from their list all who would not conform to this prohibition; and there remained only a few intrepid men, zea-

jous for the public good; who ventured to prosecute their enquiries, or who were disposed to devote themselves to a cause which they conceived to be that of the whole human race.

This proscription was the more to be lamented, because the effects of Magnetism were yet imperfectly known. The cures which had been accomplished were proofs to those, only, who had attentively witnessed the processes: convulsions, crises, sleeping, were all that had been noticed by the public, and all that was mentioned in the reports made by the scientific bodies, as if Magnetism consisted of nothing else. Those *crisiacs* ⁽²⁾ were compared to the convulsionists of *St. Medard* ⁽³⁾. Mesmer had not yet exhibited, nor analyzed, the most astonishing phenomenon; that which was to furnish an additional series of proofs of a different description; which was to excite a new enthusiasm, to shed a true light upon the theory of Magnetism, and present the means of subjecting the practice of it to an easy and regular process; I mean the *luminous crisis*, called the state of *Magnetical Somnambulism*.

It appears that this phenomenon was first perceived by *M. de Puységur* ⁽⁴⁾. Having accidentally addressed himself to a patient, whom he had cast into an apparent sleep ⁽⁵⁾, the latter informed him of his actual state,—and of the possibility of producing a similar state in other patients. From that time, Somnambulism was observed with particular attention by all Magnetisers; and the astonishment excited by this phenomenon redoubled their zeal and activity. I do not mean to say, that Magnetism would have produced less salutary effects, had it been simply practised, without any suspicion even of such a state as Somnambulism; I would only observe, that its discovery has enlightened us respecting the theory of Magnetism, and that it has furnished incontestable proofs of a truth which otherwise might have been long doubted. Let us now resume the chain of preceding events.

Notwithstanding the persecutions to which Magnetism had

been exposed, yet so many people had been cured or relieved,—so many others had witnessed the effects produced upon persons whose candour they could not suspect,—and so many unbelievers had been convinced by their own experience, that it was impossible to destroy the effects of that conviction. They, however, whose belief could not be shaken, were unable to render the sceptical partakers of it: the reports of the scientific societies were not made until, from the long discussions which had taken place, their issue was anticipated. Mesmer, wearied with this continued struggle, was on the point of quitting France; and his discovery was in danger of being lost, if (as might happen from so unfavourable a precedent) they should refuse to listen to him in other countries. The only mode of preserving it, was to obtain from him a knowledge of the means by which he had operated so many apparent prodigies: and it was, therefore, proposed that he should instruct pupils. Mesmer acceded to this proposal, and consented to communicate his doctrine to a certain number of individuals. At the same time, however, he wished to make his fortune, and demanded that a sum, not less than two hundred and forty thousand francs (about ten thousand pounds sterling), should be secured to him.

This calculation of profit did not exactly become a man who had made a discovery highly useful to mankind, though no objection was made to it. Several affluent persons came forward, and offered to procure a hundred pupils, each of whom should subscribe the sum of one hundred *louis*; and, in order not to delay the instruction, they agreed to make themselves answerable for the whole sum of ten thousand *louis*, until the number of subscriptions was complete, and meanwhile inviolably to preserve the secret. Their confidence in Mesmer doubtless prevented them from inserting an express clause, which should limit the obligation of secrecy, and from attending also to every precaution which prudence might suggest, in the writings executed between the parties. The number of his pupils daily in-

creased ; and not only the subscription was filled up, but it has been asserted that Mesmer realised more than three hundred thousand francs*.

Mesmer unfolded his doctrine. Many of his pupils established public *treatments* (*traitements*⁶) in different provinces of France, and even in the French colony of St. Domingo ; while societies, under the denomination of *Sociétés de l'Harmonie*, were instituted for the purpose of propagating Magnetism, under his direction, and according to his principles.

By adhering to the process which they had been taught to use, the new Magnetisers every where obtained uniform results : they could not attribute those results to imagination, to imitation, or to the union of many persons in any particular place ; for the greater part exerted their powers upon insulated individuals, who were often very incredulous, and without employing any of that apparatus which was exhibited by Drs. Mesmer and D'Eslon.

That harmony which was expected permanently to exist, between the master and his pupils, was not however of long duration. Conflicting pretensions interposed themselves ; and I am

* While it is to be regretted that Mesmer calculated his pecuniary interests in preference to those of his glory, we cannot with justice blame his conduct. As he had purchased the right of practising physic, he was incontestably entitled to set a price upon his instructions. It must not be forgotten, however, that he taught many persons gratuitously ; and I shall here relate a circumstance which proves that he knew how to unite delicacy with generosity, and that perhaps he did not derive so much emolument from his subscriptions as it has been insinuated.

M. Nicolas, a physician at Grenoble, went to enrol himself among the number of his pupils. On presenting the required sum, he confessed the sacrifice to be very inconvenient to him. " I thank you for your zeal and confidence," said Mesmer ; " but let it not make you uneasy, my dear sir : here are a hundred louis ; take them to the cashier's, that it may be supposed you have paid the same as the others have done ; and let this remain a secret between us."

I had this anecdote from M. Nicolas himself.

compelled to relate the circumstance, because it affords additional proofs of the reality of Magnetical Action.

The amount of subscriptions, which had been stipulated, being paid, the early pupils of Mesmer asserted that they became proprietors of the secret, by right of purchase. Their object, they maintained, had not been merely to gratify a vain curiosity, but to promulgate to all mankind the knowledge of a discovery which would be of general utility: it was necessary, therefore, that there should no longer be any mystery, and that each should be a proper judge of the course he had to pursue.

Mesmer, on the contrary, insisted that he was still the proprietor of his own discovery, and that to him alone belonged the right of disposing of it; he wished to teach his doctrine personally in England, as he had done in France; and, under various pretences, he refused to permit the publication of its principles. He said, that his pupils were not yet sufficiently instructed; that, if each individual arrogated to himself the right of teaching, they would adulterate the purity of his doctrine; that, if Magnetism was generally known, it would be abused: and he finally contended, that they had bound themselves to secrecy. The three first motives of his opposition were evident subterfuges; and with respect to the last argument, his pupils answered, that the promise of secrecy was conditional, and that it ceased to be binding upon them from the moment when Mesmer received the stipulated sum.

There can be no doubt that the pupils were right. Mesmer had engaged to reveal to them the whole particulars of his doctrine; and it was for them to judge, and to make a proper use of it. In order to preserve any right of imposing conditions, and to continue the exercise of any authority over them, he should have made a gratuitous communication of his discovery.

It is of importance to observe, that, during this schism, some of the pupils attacked their master in the most violent manner; they alleged, as a reproach to him, that the theory which he had so emphatically discovered was nothing more than a series of

obscure principles; and yet, among all those who criticised, reformed, or rejected his theory, there was not one who accused the discovery itself of being a chimerical one: they all acknowledged the effects of Magnetism, and the means of producing them.

In order to be accurate, I ought to state that a member of the faculty withdrew from the other pupils—and declared himself an antagonist of Magnetism, after having received the first lessons. It is rather a matter of surprise that there were not a greater number of seceders; for, at the close of Mesmer's lectures, the greater part of the pupils were still fluctuating in doubt.

When the hundred subscribing pupils, and a great many others, had been instructed by Mesmer, if Magnetism had been merely an illusion, can it be imagined that no one among them would have discovered it? Those pupils were afterwards dispersed; they severally treated a great variety of diseases; and if they had not been successful, how could it happen that not one of them informed the public of his having been deceived; especially at a time when such an avowal was warmly solicited, by scientific societies and by persons of the greatest influence in the country? It cannot be said, that those who purchased the secret wished to make the most of it, for their own benefit: they all demanded, on the contrary, that the means of employing it should be gratuitously placed in the hands of every one. I can imagine, that they who had paid nothing might think themselves compelled to remain silent; but each of those who had paid a hundred pounds had only one of two alternatives,—either to acknowledge themselves bound to secrecy, in order to avoid a confession of their having been duped, and thus to wait until the folly subsided (which, as in all similar cases, would soon have happened); or else to adopt the more generous course of undeceiving the public. On the contrary, all the pupils, even those who were most exasperated against Mesmer, testified that he had made a discovery of the greatest utility to mankind; and they only re-

proached him with opposing its publicity, and insisting upon the admission of those explanations which he had offered. I have thought it necessary to dwell upon this point, because the inference from it appears to me unanswerable.

It would certainly have been better if such contentions had never taken place. The pupils had obtained a privilege of instructing other persons, in those processes by which they produced Magnetical effects; the societies already alluded to had performed cures, in public establishments instituted for that purpose, and propagated the principles of Magnetism; the essential part of that doctrine was known. The theory to which Mesmer attached so much importance was of no use; they alone, who had not been instructed immediately by Mesmer, could believe that there might be some general cause, the disclosure of which was mysteriously withheld from them; and there was no great harm in this, as time would have cleared up the whole matter. What had been published, concerning the theory, gave no real information to any one; and we must admit the accuracy of M. Doppet's observation (when relating what he had seen at M. D'Eslon's, of whom he was a pupil), that "*they who knew the secret, doubted more than they who remained entirely ignorant upon the subject.*" Fortunately, that secret became no longer an object of concern; and every dispute forthwith terminated, when the discovery of *Somnambulism* enlightened all Magnetisers. From that moment, the practice of Magnetism was universally diffused, while the most extraordinary phenomena presented themselves to the eyes of all who were willing to observe them.

The Marquis de Puységur, and his two brothers, performed such surprising cures, in the corps to which they belonged, that almost every officer of those corps wished to become Magnetisers. Soon after, the Marquis instituted, at his estate of *Bu-sancy*—near *Soissons*, a public *traitement*, to which the sick resorted from very distant places. The Marquis de Tissard did

the same at his estate of *Beaubourg*, in the province of *Brie*. An extensive society, which was formed at *Strasbourg*, and composed of physicians, men of science, and some belonging to the military profession, also performed astonishing cures, and published its memoirs; the same course was pursued at *Bayonne*, at *Bordeaux*, at *Marsilles*, at *Malta*, in several other principal cities of Europe, and even in the French West-India colonies. If we were to compute the number of witnesses, whose printed attestations we possess, I doubt not they would be found to exceed *a thousand*; and this number does not form the tenth part of those who have not delivered their testimonies in so public a manner.

It might be thought, that against such a mass of proofs and assertions, neither the reports of scientific bodies, nor the disdain of several enlightened men, who were unwilling to enquire into the matter, nor the ridicule thrown upon Magnetism in sportive pamphlets—in the newspapers, and even on the stage, would have had sufficient weight to impede the progress of a discovery so useful, and so well substantiated. The conclusion, however, was, that Magnetism became much less thought of;—very little more was said about it; and, if the assertions of certain writers were to be credited, *that foolish notion at length was dropped!*

Had such been the case, it would doubtless have been a reason for suspecting the reality of Mesmer's discovery; but, in point of fact, nothing can be more false than that opinion. Since I have been occupied with Magnetism, I can affirm, that I have known more than three hundred persons similarly employed, and who have either produced or experienced its effects in a powerful degree; yet I have never had any connection with the societies already mentioned, in which many Magnetisers were incorporated. It may hence be judged how many thousand men participate in my conviction. I admit, however, that this would prove nothing, if the subject were merely matter of opinion; but it is a question of *facts*; and the number of testimonies consti-

tutes therefore a powerful proof. It is true, notwithstanding, that there has been a relaxation, the real cause of which it is necessary for me to explain.

I shall begin by mentioning a circumstance very humiliating to human reason; but though I refer to it reluctantly, a satisfactory answer must be given to one of the strongest objections that has been urged against Magnetism; an objection which most likely has caused it to be rejected by a great number of sensible men. It ought to be shewn, at the same time, how unjust it is to institute a comparison between an impostor and a man of genius; between an occult and absurd doctrine, and a simple exposition of facts, which any person is competent to ascertain. I shall state the objection in its strongest light, by using their language who advanced it in the first instance.

“A short time after Mesmer, a personage still more extraordinary made his appearance. He announced himself as belonging to a privileged order of beings; he did not confine himself merely to curing diseases, he evoked the spirits of the dead, gave a new religion to his disciples, and yet he had enthusiastic followers. Men, eminent for their good sense, their knowledge, and the rank which they held in society, were the dupes of his deceptions; they were seen paying a sort of adoration to their master; and it was not until a discussion, which arose during a lawsuit unfortunately too notorious (?), that the tricks and artifices, by which this impostor fascinated the eyes of people, were discovered. Several of those who were thus the dupes of *Cagliostro*, had also been the partisans of *Mesmer*; they were deceived by the one, as they had already been by the other;—and the evident fallacy of *Cagliostro*’s doctrine justified the rejection of their testimony who adopted it, when it was urged in support of another doctrine, equally opposed to all received notions.”

Such is the argument which was, at that time, urged by the antagonists of Magnetism. I will however go further than themselves, and admit that the belief in Magnetism contributed to

the reception of Cagliostro's absurdities. Many of those who had noticed the phenomena belonging to Somnambulism, not knowing by what means they were produced, attributed them to some occult cause ; and hence arose a disposition to credulity, by which they were easily led to admit mystical doctrines. This may even be considered as justifying the opposition to Magnetism by many reflecting men : they were afraid, lest marvellous facts should lead to the admission, as truths, of principles which they could not comprehend ; and when such principles are once admitted, it is impossible to say what will be the termination.

To reply to the objection, however, it will be sufficient to shew the difference between the conduct of Mesmer and that of Cagliostro ; also between the principles of the one, and those of the other.

Cagliostro was an unknown person, who pretended to the power of working miracles. The means of his existence, his origin, his country, his profession, were all of them so many mysteries. He acted upon the imagination ; he awakened fear and hope ; he exacted from his disciples the most profound secrecy ; he exhibited to them very astonishing things,—but then it was in assemblies where every thing was prepared ; he did not offer to communicate to any person the means of reproducing those prodigies, which he affected to perform himself, but insisted that the greatest secrecy should be united with an unlimited confidence ; and he forbade all enquiry. He was environed by mystery ; his obscure and metaphorical language was not that of reason ; when he initiated his disciples, he incessantly promised marvels and revelations to them ; he inflamed them with the desire of beholding extraordinary things ; abused their credulity and seduced the imagination of females, whom he rendered instrumental to various deceitful purposes, without their even suspecting it.

Mesmer was a member of the Faculty of Physic, who had acquired reputation from his talents. He came to display natural effects, which every body was allowed to investigate ; he invited

men of science throughout Europe to verify them, and addressed himself for that purpose to learned academies, and to medical societies; he entreated that they would attend to, and discuss his doctrine: he did not transport you into the regions of chimeras, but pretended only to possess a physical method of curing diseases, and he admitted persons of all descriptions to witness his process. It is true that, in the first instance, he enveloped with some mystery both his theory and practical operations; but he assigned, as a reason for so doing, that they were liable to abuse, and that it was necessary, in order to apply them beneficially, to have received a preliminary instruction.

Soon after this, he began to qualify pupils; he unfolded the whole of his doctrine to them, and taught the means by which they could obtain results similar to those produced by himself. Whether his theory was erroneous or not, became a question of no importance; the method which he pointed out succeeded with all who employed it. His pupils, selected from a class of men possessing much general information, and in the number of whom were many of the medical profession, were diffused in various places; they instructed others, and the same phenomena were reproduced in countries very distant from each other. Magnetism was practised, indiscriminately, by men of learning and by those who were totally divested of it; cures were accomplished, as well in remote parts of the country, as in populous towns; even simple rustics often proved to be very good magnetisers. There was no longer any secret;—every one was equally competent to ascertain the facts; every one was able to Magnetize, and consequently to become convinced. It may be still further observed, that they who denied the effects were those only who had not attempted any experiments; while all those who had, unanimously acknowledged the power of Magnetism.

In all physical doctrines, we should never prosecute our enquiries by *a priori* reasonings, when we can follow the path of observation: reasoning ought to be employed only as the medium

of connecting observations with each other : we should carefully observe before we pronounce "*this cannot be.*" The pupils of Mesmer were not convinced, either by his reasonings or by the exposition of his theory ; their conviction did not take place until they had personally made trial of a faculty with which he informed them they were naturally endowed.

I trust I have sufficiently replied to the objection which has been deduced from a comparison between *Cagliostro* and *Mesmer* ; between the fascinations employed by the one, and the cures really performed by the other. Those reflections, however, had no place in the first instance ; outward appearances alone were considered, and the transitory success of *Cagliostro* gave a dreadful blow to the doctrine of Magnetism. Many persons were fearful of being confounded with alchemists, or magicians, and did not venture any longer to offer their evidence, in favour of truths of which they were fully persuaded.

A comparison of the effects which had been witnessed at the houses of Mesmer and D'Eslon, with those which had occurred forty years before, on the grave of a clergyman, named *Pâris*, afforded another analogy very unfortunate for Magnetism. In both cases there was said to be similar juggling, similar influence of the imagination, similar enthusiasm, and similar cures performed. It may easily be supposed how strongly this objection must have been felt in a philosophical age, when so many writers had but lately employed themselves in describing the empire and dangers of superstition.

I am far from denying any of the facts upon which this comparison is grounded ; but yet there is nothing in them which should lead to the rejection of the doctrine of Magnetism ; on the contrary, they directly tend to support it.

I have already stated, that Magnetical effects had been perceived in all ages ; and that the discovery, which is the subject of our investigation, consisted in having found out the means of rendering those effects subordinate to human volition, in giving them a proper application, and in reducing them

to one single physical cause. On *Pâris's* tomb, Magnetism operated in the same way as it afterwards did by means of Mesmer's apparatus (⁶); the only difference is, that magnetisers now direct an agent, with whose action they are become acquainted; and that, at St. Medard's burying-ground, a similar action operated irregularly, and in manner that was inordinate. However, as cures are now performed by a tranquil Magnetism, upon diseased subjects wholly unconnected with each other, all objections deduced from the various ideas of convulsions, imitation and imagination, are entirely removed.

Should any readers think it singular that I ascribe several of the phenomena which formerly took place at St. Medard, to the operation of Magnetism, I entreat them to suspend their opinion until they have perused the rest of this work.

The first publications in support of Magnetism have also furnished weapons to its antagonists. Several of those works were written by enthusiasts, who exaggerated the marvellous facts that occurred, and who afterwards pretended to explain them by systems which betrayed an absolute ignorance of physical and physiological laws. By admitting the principle, it appeared as if all the consequences were likewise adopted; and prudent men, possessed of real knowledge, chose to remain silent, under the apprehension of committing their reputation. It was not until after the state of Somnambulism had fallen under especial observation, and when writers limited themselves to relate only the results of experiments, that publications appeared in which real truths and solid instruction were to be found.

Other causes afterwards contributed to produce a belief, in persons who had not taken any trouble to acquire information, that Magnetism was a subject forgotten.

In the early period of its discovery, the novelty of the phenomena and the marvellous character of the effects produced, had exalted the imagination of a vast number of people. With this, philanthropic ideas were intermixed, and the zeal with which the public mind was inflamed enabled the proselytes to surmount

every difficulty, by sustaining their fortitude and their patience. Gradually, however, that ardour relaxed in some and became extinguished in others: few persons, at present, chuse to devote themselves to those anxious cares which accompany the practice of Magnetism, or can reconcile themselves to the privations and the voluntary subjection to troublesome attendance, which it demands: curiosity is no longer an incentive, because magnetisers have already witnessed a sufficiency of singular facts, to be indifferent as to the pursuit of any more; while other people take no concern in a matter which they disbelieve.

They who still occupy themselves with Magnetism do it in silence; they recommend its application, only where there seems to be a necessity for it; and, whatever satisfaction they might derive from conversing upon the subject, they generally avoid doing so with unbelievers, being aware of the uselessness of assertions and controversy. Hence, the latter are led to imagine that Magnetism is given up,—because public *treatments* are no longer seen, and because the subject is no longer mentioned with the same enthusiasm as at a former period. Lastly, the events of the French revolution have withdrawn the attention of most men, from a study which requires the application of a mind tranquil and undisturbed by vehement passions.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, Magnetism, although pursued with less ardour than before, has never been relinquished. From the year 1784 to 1789, there were formed, in several principal cities of Europe, societies which instituted public *treatments*. That of Strasburgh, which was established in 1785, consisted, four years afterwards, of *one hundred and eighty-eight* members, nearly all of whom were distinguished by their rank, as well as by their learning, and several of whom were physicians of eminence and celebrity. These respectable men published, annually, the result of their observations and their labours: more than five hundred persons, who had resorted to their beneficence, shewed themselves eager to promulgate the obligations they owed to the society. There were other

individuals besides, both in towns and in the country, who cured diseased people unconnected with each other, and who have considered it as a duty to proffer their homage to truth. When the French revolution compelled these men to disperse, and provide for their personal safety, who had thus sacrificed their time and their fortunes, with a view only to public good; and when they found themselves reduced to silence, upon subjects which might have served as a pretence for persecution, the practice of Magnetism was then unostentatiously preserved in the bosom of private families, and innumerable testimonies, the series of which has been uninterrupted from its first discovery down to the present day, abundantly prove that it has continued to be efficaciously employed. At this period, it appears to occupy a considerable degree of attention; and I know several medical men of high repute, who, in certain cases, not only advise the use of Magnetism, but who personally exercise this natural faculty.

I shall not dwell any further upon the discovery of Magnetism, its promulgation, its propagation throughout Europe, the obstacles which it has encountered, or the causes which appear to have retarded its progress: to prove all that I have advanced, would require to transcribe whole volumes. They who wish to be convinced that I have said nothing but what is correct, need only consult the publications which have taken place upon the subject, from the year 1781 to the present time.

I shall attempt hereafter a short review of such, among those publications, in which facts, principles and objections, appear to be stated; but will now proceed to an exposition of the proofs which establish the reality of Magnetical action, and to point out the means by which we may acquire a conviction of it.

CHAPTER II.

Proofs in support of the doctrine of Magnetism,—and the means of conviction, respecting the reality of Magnetical action.

WHEN we wish to form a judgment, concerning a doctrine opposed to opinions generally admitted, we must examine the proofs upon which that doctrine rests. These proofs consist, either in assertions, in substantial facts, or in reasonings. I discriminate assertions from facts, because the latter are capable of being discussed by a comparison of their circumstances, or of being verified by experiments; whilst I consider assertions as nothing more than opinions which are advanced by observers.

Assertions have no weight, unless they proceed from persons highly distinguished by their understanding and veracity; they are not of sufficient authority to produce conviction, they merely incline reflecting men to suspend their judgment, so long as they cannot discover how those who advance them have been betrayed into error; they ought to be examined with the greater distrust, in proportion as they are of an extraordinary description, and far removed from commonly-received notions.

Facts should be considered, first in their single character, and then as a whole. The chief requisite, which qualifies us to judge them accurately, is to be divested of all prepossession. We are justified in rejecting them without examination, if they be in contradiction to any positive law in nature; but then, that law must be clearly demonstrated, and the opposition to it must be evident.

There are some facts which we can ourselves verify by experiments; and when that is the case, it is indispensably necessary to adopt this method, and to neglect no precautions, how-

ever minute, which may be indicated as essential to success. There are other facts which cannot be ascertained in this manner, and which must be adopted or rejected upon the testimony of those who attest them. These last are subject to the principles of historical criticism; and I shall in a few words recal those principles to my readers, which, although well known, are not practically attended to.

Proofs are to be deduced, *first*, from the number of testimonies; *secondly*, from the character of the witnesses; *thirdly*, from their understanding and knowledge; *fourthly*, from their motives; *fifthly*, from the probability that they could not have been deceived; *sixthly*, from the concordance which may be found between different accounts given of any particular fact; *seventhly*, from the agreement or concordance which may be found between different parts of the same account. Let us now consider the application of these different kinds of proof.

First.—The number of testimonies ought not to be estimated by the number of persons. The immediate witness,—he who has himself observed all the circumstances of the fact, is the only one upon whose testimony any value should be set; and the others should not be reckoned in the list, even though they have informed themselves upon the subject, and have witnessed some part of the facts. I go still further, and am prepared to maintain that if an extraordinary event has taken place in the midst of a crowd of spectators, all of whom declare that they saw it, their attestation is entitled to less confidence than that of a small number of observers; because, in numerous assemblies, enthusiasm is easily communicated, and obstructs that calm self-possession which is necessary towards an attentive examination.

Second.—The character of witnesses ought to determine the degree of confidence to which they are entitled. If they be men of serious habits, of mature age, of a distinguished rank in society;—if they enjoy public respect and private es-

teem, it is fair to presume that they will be cautious how they commit themselves, and that they will not lightly affirm any thing of which they have not acquired a full certainty.

Third.—The third consideration refers to the competency of the understanding and knowledge, possessed by the witnesses.

Fourth.—The fourth relates to the motives by which they may be actuated; and I shall combine this consideration with the preceding, because it is not merely sufficient, for seeing things clearly, that there be a desire to know the truth, or that the individual be sufficiently enlightened to discern reality from appearances, and to escape the influence of illusion; it will also be necessary that the judgment should be unbiassed by personal interest, or by those passions which have often misled men whose intentions were the most pure.

Fifth.—It must be considered, whether the fact related by the witnesses is of such a nature that they could neither deceive themselves, nor be imposed upon by others; a distinction should also be carefully made, in what constitutes the phenomenon observed, between that which essentially belongs to it and that which does not.

Sixth.—When similar facts have been remarked in different countries, at different periods, and by observers wholly unconnected with each other, it is essential to examine whether those facts have a mutual conformity, and whether certain circumstances connected with them be not denied by some, while they are attested by others; for in that case we should admit, as sufficiently proved, only those parts in which they all agree. The silence of some observers, upon such or such a circumstance, does not altogether destroy its probability, because it is possible that they may not all have seen or related the same particulars; but we ought to reject every thing of which a single attentive observer positively denies the reality.

Seventh.—The concordance between several parts of the

same account, or the connection of circumstances with the principal fact and their dependance from a single cause, or from various causes, are points which should be examined with the most scrupulous attention, and discussed with the severest criticism. A fact, true in itself, may be related with accessory circumstances that are false; it is important, therefore, to discriminate those accessories, to penetrate the sources of the illusion, and to determine how far that illusion may have extended. In order to do this, it will be of importance to ascertain whether the account was drawn up at the moment when the facts themselves were observed, or a long time after and from memory; for these two circumstances must regulate the judgment, concerning the credibility of the details.

If the account was drawn up at the moment, the author will have stated with greater candor the impressions he experienced, and the events which passed under his eyes; but on the other hand also, we must be more upon our guard against the influence of enthusiasm, and especially against such inferences as are not the result of reflection and comparison. If the account involve a series of successive facts, it will possess much more weight in case those facts shall have been written down as they gradually occurred; for, then, there will be no room to suspect that the agreement which may exist, between the different periods to which the facts are referred, is to be ascribed to the opinions or prejudices of the author.

Let us now take a retrospective view of some parts of what has been stated.

The facts related may be classed under three different heads. Some must necessarily be true, unless the narrator of them be absolutely a liar, or a madman. Others may not be true, even though the person who relates them should possess perfect integrity; because he may be self-deceived. Others, again, may be true in part, but vitiated in their circumstances. Let us select a few examples, among the facts which have been brought forward in support of

the doctrine of Magnetism, and which belong to the first of those three classes.

A person named *Viélet* (a game-keeper and school-master at *Espiez*, near *Chateau-Thierry*), afflicted for four years with a pulmonary disorder, accompanied by a variety of other complaints—the particulars and treatment of which may be found in the different written applications addressed to several physicians for advice during that interval, was cast into a state of Somnambulism, by the *Marquis de Puységur*, on the 15th of November, 1784, at ten o'clock at night. Being then interrogated as to the state of his health, he answered, that not being able to speak without fatigue, he should prefer to commit the particulars of his complaint to writing. The Marquis accordingly furnished him with two sheets of paper, after having previously taken the precaution of setting a mark upon them; and then shut him up in a room, without any light, and of which he took the key. During the night, *Viélet* wrote a circumstantial history of his disease,—of the sensations he experienced while in his actual state of Somnambulism,—of the manner in which he acquired, in that state, a perception of the cause and nature of his complaint,—and of the crisis which was afterwards to produce his cure. He stated in that writing, which was on the 16th, that between nine and ten o'clock on the following day—namely, the 17th, he should, after many painful efforts, void part of a collection of humours which he had on his lungs; and on the 16th, at seven o'clock in the morning,—being still in a state of Somnambulism, he delivered to the Marquis de Puységur that document, which was most extraordinary in every respect. The latter immediately went and deposited it in the office of a notary, at Soissons. On the following day, and precisely at the hour mentioned, *Viélet* voided the morbid matter in the presence of witnesses; after which he announced his cure, and the events strictly verified every thing he had foretold (^o). Here then is a fact which cannot be denied, unless we suppose that the Marquis de Puységur had forged the

written paper, which he afterwards published under the name of Viélet, and that the respectable witnesses who saw the circumstances were accomplices in the imposture⁽¹⁰⁾.

M. Tardy de Montravel wrote every day the particulars of his Magnetical treatment⁽¹¹⁾ of *Mademoiselle N***** : that treatment was prolonged nearly a twelvemonth. The correspondence between the events foretold, in the month of April, and their accomplishment in May following, is incontestable, unless we can imagine that *M. Tardy de Montravel* had a deliberate intention to deceive the public ; for the crises announced by *Mademoiselle N***** were of such a description, that it was impossible, in a waking state, to foresee the moment when they would take place, and equally impossible to feign their existence⁽¹²⁾. Thousands of similar facts might be adduced.

The cure of diseases constitutes a species of facts belonging to the second class.

I have myself cured diseases which appeared to be incurable ; but I may have been deceived as to their nature ; and still more, I may have been deceived in attributing the cure to the means which I employed. In such cases, the proof that the effects produced are truly referable to the cause assigned, can only be established by the authority of a great number of analogous facts ; and even then, however convincing that proof may be to him who has made the experiments, it must still be deficient in full weight to those who collect testimonies, and who are always justified in supposing, in the witnesses, prejudice, exaggeration, or enthusiasm.

With respect to facts partly true, but vitiated in some of their circumstances, they ought to be particularly subjected to the ordeal of criticism. Every part of them, which can be ascribed to credulity, precipitation, illusion, &c., should be excluded as doubtful ; but the remainder ought to be admitted. Unfortunately, this is a distinction which the partisans and antagonists of every new system equally neglect. With the former, the truth of the principal fact is made to carry with it the credibility of the

accessories; with the latter, it is sufficient to discover some circumstances which are false, to justify a rejection of the whole.

Finally, after having collected and ascertained the facts, the next point is whether they do, or do not, prove the doctrine of those who relate them. We cannot enter upon this discussion with too much care: all conjectures must be renounced, and we must admit no other consequences than those which evidently result from established facts.

I trust I have thus fixed the principles upon which we should regulate our conduct, in the examination of a new doctrine that appears contrary to received opinions: let us now apply these principles to that of Magnetism.

I require that those facts only should be admitted, which are attested by witnesses whose sincerity we cannot suspect, and who themselves cannot have been deceived with regard to such facts;—that we subtract every circumstance which is not as well authenticated as the principal fact itself;—that we attach no value to testimonies respecting which there may be any degree of uncertainty;—that we infer no consequences, in support of the doctrine, unless they be self-evident; and that we reject every principle, and every consequence that might be deduced from it, which may be contradictory to a positive law of nature. At the same time, however, I think I have a right to require also that we should not decline an investigation of the subject, on account of the extravagant pretensions of a few enthusiasts; for the imperfect proofs, which may be given of a fact, do not preclude the possibility of its being established by the most convincing testimony.

If then we examine, according to these principles, the proofs brought forward in support of Magnetism, we shall find,

First.—That the effects produced by Magnetism are attested by more than a thousand witnesses, who have given their testimonies in writing; and that those witnesses have either personally experienced the effects, produced them upon others, or enquired into them with the most scrupulous accuracy.

Secondly.—That the greater part of the witnesses, in the first instance, considered those effects as utterly impossible, and did not alter their opinion until they were convinced by experience.

Thirdly.—That the witnesses of whom I speak were persons of enlightened minds; that among them were many physicians; and that several were men whose rank and character would have deterred them from exposing themselves to ridicule, by publishing such extraordinary facts, if they had not felt it a duty to render that homage to the cause of truth.

Fourthly.—That they who have thus rendered public testimony, through the medium of the press, are very few in number, compared to those who, having witnessed similar facts, were satisfied with attesting them when applied to for information. I could, for example, adduce more than three hundred persons of this description, among my own acquaintance; although I certainly am not acquainted with the thousandth part of those who are as well convinced upon the subject as myself.

Fifthly.—That, in the much greater number of those who deny the effects of Magnetism, there is not a single person to be found who has employed the only certain and appropriate method of informing himself upon the subject, although there are many who have cursorily touched upon it; a proceeding much better calculated to destroy confidence, than if they had never noticed it at all.

Sixthly.—That if a few ignorant enthusiasts have circulated absurd reports concerning Magnetism, it is because they have indeed witnessed real facts, but, led away by their imagination, have corrupted the simplicity of such facts and pretended to account for them by theories divested of common sense; which gives us occasion to remark, that if the testimony of such witnesses cannot be offered as a proof in support of Magnetism, neither does it authorise us to reject the evidence of more intelligent observers.

Seventhly.—That among the accounts given of Magnetical processes, many of them were drawn up in the form of a jour-

nal,—the observer writing down, after each sitting, whatever he had seen or heard (¹³); and that, consequently, the consonance between the different parts of the account could not be exposed to doubt, unless we suspected the integrity of the writer; a suspicion which could never apply to such persons as the Marquis de Puységur and his brothers, M. Tardy de Montravel, and a hundred more individuals known to be equally respectable.

Eighth.—That it is impossible to imagine that *the one hundred and eighty-eight members*, who in the year 1789 composed the society at Strasburgh,—and the greater part of whom had sacrificed, during the four preceding years, their time and even their health in the public practice of Magnetism, were only a set of visionary men; and that the patients whom they cured, as well as the relations, friends and medical attendants of those patients, amounting to at least five hundred, and every one of whom has attested the cures, were all of them dupes.

Ninth.—That the same argument may be applied with respect to the societies of Bourdeaux, Lyons, &c.

Tenth.—That the testimony of a great number of Magnetisers who, without belonging to any society, have obtained similar results from their operations, during many successive years in which they silently performed upon patients unconnected with each other, must destroy any objection which might be urged upon the ground of an *esprit de corps* (¹⁴).

Eleventh.—That whatever difference of opinion may exist among Magnetisers, respecting the theory, there is none as to the reality and the efficacy of the agent which they all employ.

Twelfth.—That, even supposing Magnetism had not operated those cures which are attributed to it, yet its physical action, upon the organization of valetudinarians, would not be the less demonstrated from a multitude of other effects.

Thirteenth.—That if nine-tenths of the accounts we have on the subject were doubted, there would still remain enough to furnish convincing proofs.

Fourteenth.—That if we compare the writings published for

and against the doctrine of Magnetism, it is observable that the former consist, mostly, of collections of positive facts perfectly authenticated; while the latter (if we except the reports of scientific societies) contain nothing but jests, vague objections, or assertions often contradicted by those even who are quoted as authorities in support of them, or comparisons instituted between the doctrine and success of Mesmer, and the doctrines and success of certain enthusiasts or empirics; a species of opposition which should induce us to enquire with the most vigilant distrust into the facts related, but which certainly does not prove their falsity.

Fiftieth.—That the commissioners appointed by the academy of Sciences at Paris, and those of the Royal Medical Society, —far from denying the effects of magnetical action, do in fact acknowledge some which are of a very extraordinary nature; and that they have endeavoured to explain those effects by insufficient causes, none of which have existed in the processes of Magnetism since the year 1784; for, subsequently to that period, there have been seen neither convulsive crises, nor any apparatus by which the imagination of the patients, to whom any of those processes were applied, might be affected.

Sixteenth.—That the theory which was attacked, in the reports above alluded to, was altogether hypothetical, and absolutely useless for establishing the reality of an agent and the efficacy of its action.

Seventeenth.—That, from the sole principle of regard to truth, one of the commissioners (¹⁵) had the courage to make a separate report; although his colleagues, and even a powerful minister of state, employed the most urgent solicitations to dissuade him from it.

Eighteenth.—That a great number of practices in use among the ancients; a great number of cures performed by the application of hands, and by incantation; in a word, a multitude of extraordinary but well-attested facts, admit of a natural solution by the doctrine of Magnetism; while the knowledge of the

effects it is capable of producing, is sufficient to overthrow many of those superstitious opinions which have so long misled mankind.

Nineteenth.—Lastly, that, since the year 1784, the process of Magnetism being generally known; the experiments having infinitely multiplied, and those facts which at first were misconceived having now been well observed and separated from all adventitious circumstances, it is absurd to renew objections none of which can apply either to the theory or to the practice of the present period, and to reject, upon the authority of those objections, facts which every one has power to ascertain.

In order to be convinced that I have not exaggerated any of the grounds of credibility which I have advanced, it will only be necessary to peruse the writings of the Marquis de Puységur and his brothers, those of M. Tardy de Montravel, the account of the cures performed at Strasburgh, and a few other works of the same description. In those books will be found more than a thousand testimonies, all given by persons of respectability, and who have either themselves experienced, or produced in others, the effects I mention.

It will be proper, then, to pass over every thing which concerns the theory, and all the modes of explaining the production of facts; attending only to such of those facts as are sufficiently authenticated, and with regard to which it is impossible that those who relate them can have been deceived. When this investigation has been candidly pursued, I think it will not then be doubted that there is something of reality in Magnetism, which cannot be produced by any other cause.

This conviction of the mind, however, will not be sufficient; it will diminish in proportion as we lose the remembrance of what we have read, and as we find that the opinions of which we were persuaded are treated with disdain. The only real and solid conviction will be that which results from our own experience, and which is connected with things that we have noticed

and with which we still continue to be occupied. In order that any truth may invariably determine our judgment, and influence our will and our actions, it is not enough that it be shewn to our minds ; it must also be supported by the testimony of our senses, it must penetrate our hearts, and become associated with our habits.

I will presently point out the only means of acquiring that thorough conviction ; but before doing so, I shall offer a few words concerning the third species of proofs, namely those which result from reasoning.

The requisite conditions, in order to obtain certainty in any result from reasoning, are, first, that the reasoning itself be grounded upon self-evident or at least indisputable principles ; and secondly, that the consequences should be deduced from them in a strictly logical manner. These rules were forgotten, when it was attempted to establish the theory of magnetism upon metaphysical principles ; and hence it arose that the theory itself became uncertain, and even that several theories utterly false have been produced.

Various suppositions have been indulged upon the subject. Sometimes the effect of Magnetism was ascribed to a universal fluid, which establishes a communication between beings of every description ; sometimes to an action of the soul, independently of corporeal organs ; sometimes to an occult system of physics, —to sympathies, affinities, innate instinct, &c. All this is obscure, and can never satisfy intelligent minds, or true naturalists.

The proper theory can consist only in the concatenation of facts, and in the development of those laws of nature to which they have one common relation ; but among the facts which have been related, some are doubtful, others are not sufficiently proved, and others quite false in several of their circumstances.

In the present state of the question, therefore, we must dismiss all theories, and confine ourselves to ascertaining whether there be a sufficiency of authenticated facts, to establish the reality of Magnetical effects. We must then be cautious to

avoid deducing from those facts any consequences which are not necessarily comprehended in them. In rejecting all theory, however, we ought carefully to collect, compare and classify the facts, and endeavour to discover the link by which they are united, as also the laws on which they depend. Let us then give up all unnecessary reasonings,—all metaphysical opinions,—all that has been found in the philosophers of antiquity and in the writers of the seventeenth century, and seek only for those truths respecting which we may attain conviction from observation and experience.

I shall now proceed to indicate the course which must be followed, in order to ascertain the effects of Magnetism. I shall suppose that I address myself to a man, in whom the perusal of the works I have cited and the proofs I have offered has produced the dawning of belief; who is sincerely desirous to be further instructed by his personal experience, and firmly to settle his opinion upon the subject. This disposition of mind is necessary for the attainment of success.

After having read the works alluded to, so as to acquire a precise idea of the process and the action of Magnetism, look out, among your acquaintance, for some person familiar with the practice. You may easily find such a person; and his advice is likely to be of assistance, especially in sustaining the requisite confidence in your own faculties. This instruction, however, is not so absolutely necessary but that it may be dispensed with. Then, go into the country, if it be possible; for it is much more easy to make experiments in hamlets and villages, than in great towns; but neither is this condition essential, and I propose it only, because it may lead to more certain and immediate success. When you are thus in the midst of country people,—who have in general purer morals, greater simplicity, and an organization less vitiated by the passions and by the frequent use of medicines than the inhabitants of cities, seek out the sick; and select, by preference, those whose cases are not so dangerous as to make you apprehensive that the progress of

their disorder will be too rapid. Shew, to one or two of these individuals, that you feel a sort of affection for them,—a concern for their situation ; and express an anxiety to afford them relief. Do not pronounce the word *Magnetism* in their presence ; avoid every thing which might be likely to make an impression upon their imagination ; touch them under any pretence,—such as that their blood does not circulate freely,—that you wish to ascertain whether the pulsations of the heart are regular,—that you are desirous of trying whether a few frictions would not sooth their pains, &c. It is so easy to persuade poor people, of our having both the desire to alleviate their sufferings and the means of doing so, that you will not find much difficulty in pursuing this course : the essential point is, not to act upon the imagination of a patient, in order that you may be better able to discriminate the effects produced by Magnetism, from those which might proceed from other causes. In this manner, *touch* ⁽¹⁶⁾ daily the two subjects you have selected, and continue to do the same, for a week. If, at the expiration of that time, you have produced no sensible effect, select others ; and I venture to affirm, it will never happen to a magnetiser that he shall successively touch ten sick persons without meeting with one, out of the number, who will experience the effects of Magnetism in a very evident manner.

At the same time, it must be remembered that no action whatever can result, except from the adequate exercise of a faculty proper to produce it ; and as I assume that you are not yet convinced of possessing this faculty, I have here to prescribe conditions of the greatest importance for your guidance. If you strictly fulfil them, I will answer for your success ;—if you neglect them, the effects you may however produce will only be insignificant, and perhaps none may be produced at all ; but even then, if you are candid, you will confess that your experiments were not correctly made, and that you have not therefore any

right to affirm that the effects announced to you are impossible to be produced.

These conditions may appear like absurdities to unbelievers. But I must repeat that they are indispensable ; and that, if you are resolved to devote six weeks of your time to the object of acquiring information and to fix your opinion, you must, during those six weeks, dismiss all the prepossessions which may have been entertained in your mind respecting this matter, all your antecedent opinions, and be submissive to every thing which I am about to prescribe.—Do not indulge any reasoning upon the subject, until the expiration of that time ; when you may reason as much as you please, and when you will determine your judgment according to what shall have fallen under your observation (¹⁷).

If the testimonies which I have cited have made no impression whatever upon your mind, and if you merely wish to prove the falsity of all that has been said in behalf of the action of Magnetism and of its salutary effects, you then will certainly not produce nor see any thing of that kind. I shall suppose therefore, that you are not actually convinced, but in a state of doubt ; desirous of being informed and also of finding that the method I have pointed out, by which you may become useful to your fellow-creatures, is not chimerical. Upon this supposition, I shall now disclose to you the principles and teach you their application.

The practice of Magnetism requires, first, *an active volition towards a benevolent purpose* ; secondly, *a firm belief in your power to produce the requisite action* ; thirdly, *a full confidence, which is to accompany the exercise of that power* (¹⁸).

The exercise of *volition* depends solely on yourself. As to the *belief*, you do not yet possess it, but you can place your mind in that condition which would naturally belong to it if you did believe. In order to arrive at this point, it is sufficient to dismiss all doubts, to be desirous of success, and to act with simplicity, without suffering the attention to be di-

verted from its proper object: you will then assuredly produce some effects, and the very first which you remark will realize that requisite belief and give birth to *confidence*.

Forget, for a moment, all your acquired knowledge in natural philosophy and in metaphysics; remove from your mind every objection which may suggest itself, and think of nothing else than of giving relief to the afflicted person upon whom your attention is employed. The *faith*, upon which so much has been said, is not in itself essential;—it does not constitute the principle of magnetical action; it is necessary to the magnetiser, only as a motive that determines him to use a faculty, with which he is naturally endowed, and the existence of which is independent of his opinion.

In the exercise of your will, avoid making any efforts; for if you are desirous of doing good, volition will find sufficient energy in itself. Be calm and patient;—do not dissipate your attention; think only of what you are about, without troubling yourself as to the result: imagine that you have the power to lay hold of the disease and throw it aside.

In selecting patients, avoid fixing upon those who are afflicted with nervous disorders, or who have any disgusting complaints; for it would require a more ardent zeal than can be expected on a first trial, to overcome our natural reluctance to touch the latter,—and to have already become familiarized with the practical operations of Magnetism, so as not to feel greatly embarrassed with the former, in case they should experience any nervous crises. Avoid also to attempt the cure of any patient afflicted with serious chronical disorders, which are of long standing and much complicated; unless you are sure of being able to continue your attentions to him, in case the treatment should require to be prolonged for several months.

If any one, recently seized with an acute disease, should present himself to you, undertake his cure without hesitation; for it is in those cases that Magnetism produces the most sudden

and remarkable effects. But be particularly careful not to delay medical assistance on that account; for, the success being uncertain, you would expose yourself to the most painful regret. *Touch* the individual thus afflicted, before there can have been sufficient time to apply other remedies, and you will easily judge of the course you should afterwards pursue.

Do not magnetise in the presence of witnesses, and particularly in that of persons actuated by a vague curiosity: only allow a single individual near you, one who feels a great interest in the patient, and whose presence will not in any way constrain you. If you magnetise a mother, her daughter or her husband may be present;—if a child, its father or mother;—if a young man, his brother or his friend, &c.; but exclude every other witness, in order that your attention may not be diverted. Be careful, also, that the person admitted at the first sitting is the same who assists at the subsequent ones.

If it should happen that you produce any sensible effects at your first experiment, do not precipitate your inquiries respecting them; be sparing of questions, and rest satisfied with observing and continuing to act. Should you produce a state of apparent sleep, wait until the patient awakens of himself; and in the mean time, during about half an hour, employ the process necessary to direct your action either from head to foot, generally, or locally upon the part diseased; afterwards, in order not to fatigue yourself, rest satisfied with merely holding both his thumbs, or resting one hand upon his knees,—you being still occupied with him, but without any mental perturbation.

When you perceive that the patient is fast asleep⁽¹⁹⁾, you may ask him, just loud enough to be heard: *Are you asleep?* or, *How do you find yourself?* If he should neither awake nor appear to hear you, then leave him in the same state, and repeat the question a quarter of an hour afterwards, in a somewhat louder voice.

If the patient should reply to you without waking,—either

by signs or by words, it may then be concluded that he is probably in a state of Somnambulism; and you may further ask him a few simple questions, such as: *Am I doing you any good?—How long will you remain in this state?—When am I to magnetise you again?—Do you notice your disease?*

You will carefully abstain from putting any further questions, as these will be fully sufficient for the first time⁽²⁰⁾. You will return on the following day, at the same hour, or any other which the patient may have directed whilst in a Somnambulist state; and you will adopt every possible precaution to keep him in utter ignorance of whatever has been done, or said, during that crisis. Do not mention any thing upon the subject to your friends; for it will be necessary to wait until you have witnessed further effects, before you can venture to relate them. I shall hereafter treat more particularly of the conduct which ought to be observed towards Somnambulists.

In case the patient should feel only a sensation of heat or cold; or that of a fluid apparently flowing upon him, as if it were water; a numbness of the feet, or a drowsiness; you will then leave nature to her own operations, and observe whether, in the subsequent experiments, those effects do not acquire a greater intensity.

If the patient should chance to experience any nervous crisis, or fit (which may possibly occur the first time of your touching one), endeavour to calm him by magnetising gently without contact; exciting in your mind the desire, or rather a determinate volition, not to increase those effects for the sake of witnessing any curious phenomena, but solely to bring him relief. Pass your hand from his head to his feet, which diminishes the violence of such crises. But, above all, be not alarmed; call for no assistance, and be cautious of impeding the progress of natural and salutary effects, by using any adventitious methods. Remain perfectly calm; remember the precepts given by experienced magnetisers, and recollect that the interruption of natural crises may often prove dange-

rous⁽²¹⁾. It is, in fact, because such instances are not unlikely to take place, that it is useful to receive instructions before you begin to magnetise; and these you may easily obtain from any prudent practitioner; or, at all events, you may find them in the works of the Marquis de Puységur and his brothers,—of M. Tardy de Montravel, and in the Memoirs of the Strasburgh Society.

I would not advise you to have recourse to the *chain*⁽²²⁾, nor to any other apparatus or extraordinary means employed in the school of Mesmer; those accessories being, in my opinion, unnecessary when only one or two patients are to be treated. In some particular circumstances, I have seen good effects produced by the *chain*; but in other cases, I have also remarked its inconveniences: upon this subject I shall make some observations, when I come to examine the different processes of Magnetism. You might, notwithstanding, endeavour to form a *chain*, if you were sure of collecting, for that purpose, eight or ten country people who would wholly give themselves up to that implicit confidence in you, which is requisite for success; perhaps a few singular and unexpected results might be thus produced, but it would be much more difficult to analyse and verify such phenomena, than those you are likely to obtain by acting singly and upon one individual at a time.

Among the patients upon whom your experiments are made, bestow particular care upon any one who appears more sensible than the rest to magnetical action, and give him your special attention. Should there be another also, whose case you were unwilling to relinquish, they may both be attended to at the same time, but separately from each other.

After having thus employed six weeks in making experiments, (in which period it may be supposed you will have tried nearly a dozen individuals,) if you should produce no effects, although you are certain of having acted with the requisite intentions, and of having strictly fulfilled every one of the conditions I have

prescribed, you will then be entitled to consider all magnetisers as visionary men.—It is not that it be altogether impossible to have attempted a dozen of experiments unsuccessfully; but this event is so improbable, that every magnetiser will agree with me in thinking such a test more than sufficient.

It is further to be observed, that you should never attempt to magnetise those who are in good health; for nine-tenths of such persons are scarcely accessible to magnetical action, or rather they are altogether beyond its reach. If those whom you magnetise have absolutely not experienced any effects, you may, after the third sitting, relinquish them and try other subjects; for, generally speaking, those effects are manifested within that period, upon persons who are at all susceptible of them. In certain local diseases, however, the action may begin to take place much later, and yet finally produce a cure.

Thus, for instance, in a treatment which I undertook of a tumour in the breast, I perceived that the person whom I magnetised did not at first experience any effect; and it was not until the *thirtieth* day, that she began to feel a burning heat, which was followed by a local inflammation. This crisis lasted three days, after which the tumour was found to be diminished. From that moment, the magnetical action continued to produce a violent heat, and the tumour gradually dispersed. It entirely disappeared in the course of three months, and the individual afflicted with it has ever since enjoyed the most perfect health.

“You require,” it will perhaps be said, “that, during six weeks, a person is to renounce all his customary habits; that he is, in some measure, to seclude himself from the rest of the world; and that he is to sacrifice two or three hours, daily, to a troublesome occupation, for the purpose of enquiring into a phenomenon which many enlightened men consider as an illusion;—you require also that, during those six weeks, he should so subdue his imagination, as to believe, even while he is doubting. Can there be no other method devised, more simple and more certain?—There are, according to your own account,

many persons who still practice Magnetism: why should I not ask one of them to shew me some extraordinary and decisive fact: a *Somnambulist*, for example? When I have seen such a fact, I shall be convinced. I can then, also, repeat the experiments; and, it appears from your own principles, that the conviction I shall thus have acquired will render my success more easy and more certain."

I confess this method would be the most commodious. But if adopted, observe what will happen:

First.—You will experience some difficulty in finding a prudent magnetiser who will consent to shew you a *Somnambulist*.

Secondly.—You will have the same difficulty in finding *Somnambulists* willing to subject themselves to your observations, when in that state.

Thirdly.—It is more likely than otherwise, that your presence would be irksome to the *Somnambulist*; he might also not be well disposed at the time⁽²³⁾; or you might, from those or from other causes, be disappointed in the greater part of your expectations.

Fourthly.—Supposing even that a *Somnambulist* were shewn to you, and that he were sufficiently well disposed for an experiment, the phenomena would astonish but not convince you. Nay, if what fell under your observation were to persuade you into belief for the moment, the impression would soon be erased from your mind. You would suspect, perhaps, that the magnetiser endeavoured to draw you into his opinion, and that the *somnambulist* was not actually asleep⁽²⁴⁾; you would probably seek for every explanation of the matter which might undeceive you with respect to a pretended illusion. Glancing twice or thrice, over such effects of Magnetism, would not be sufficient to establish your belief: real conviction can result only from a series of facts, and from the consonancy subsisting between them. Lastly, when you relate what has caused your astonishment, you will be considered as a visionary; and you will be told of so many instances of men of sense having been duped,

that at last you will suspect yourself to be one of the number. That suspicion will be much stronger, if the magnetiser to whom you may have applied, should happen to be one of those enthusiasts who exaggerate the marvellous part of the effects they produce; you will then find, that he does not fulfil all he promised,—that he attributes to an occult cause, what ought to find a more natural explanation; and your mind will remain impressed with the objections only, while your confidence will be for ever destroyed.

If, instead of exhibiting the phenomenon of Somnambulism to your view, you should be shewn the more simple effects of Magnetism, you might attribute them either to the imagination, to chance, or to some cause other than the real one; and every reflection you then made upon the subject would destroy more and more that ingenuousness and simplicity which are absolutely necessary for being capable of seeing things in their true and proper light.

When, on the contrary, you have personally produced a series of magnetical effects, during a whole month, you will have acquired a certitude of their reality. If, by Magnetising, you produce (for example) merely a state of sleep, you will be certain that it is not (as I have sometimes heard it insinuated) the result of weariness; because you will constantly produce that sleep in the same manner, and, at each repetition, within a less space of time. You will be conscious that you have not acted upon the imagination of your patients;—that they have no interest in deceiving you, and that they are not sufficiently acquainted with the various effects which Magnetism is likely to produce, to be able to simulate them. Should you be so fortunate as to produce Somnambulism, you will be able to ascertain the reality of that state, by numerous observations; and as you will have given to your natural faculty of volition a determinate direction, it will then be impossible to mistake the similarity of the effects produced, with those which you actually intended. If you procure relief to a sick person, you will be able to judge

whether or not that relief resulted from the process you employed; and it may become a matter of indifference—so far as relates to your conviction, whether the cure (admitting that it should have taken place) be ascribable to nature, or to Magnetism. The slightest effects, from the gradation perceived between them, will become proofs to him who personally acts. For example: if you magnetise a simple peasant, and, when directing your action upon him from the head to the feet, you ask him whether he feels any thing, he should reply, in the first instance, that he did not; but after a certain time, perhaps at the expiration of half an hour, he should say, without being asked any question: “*I feel your hand, as if it were a hot iron*”; and shortly after, “*I feel as if warm water were running over my legs, in the same direction as your hand*”; you are certain that this rustic is absolutely ignorant of such a sensation being among the most common which Magnetism produces, and that he would never have imagined it, unless it had been suggested by any indiscreet questions of your own. It will easily be perceived that I have here adduced, as an instance, only the minor effects of Magnetism; and yet, they constitute a sufficient proof, for him who produces them frequently and always in the same manner.

The same inferences may be deduced from several other very common effects, but which will scarcely attract the notice of an accidental spectator. Thus, a man whom you magnetise tells you that his eyes are very heavy,—that they feel as if there was sand in them,—that he cannot open them,—and that he experiences a sensation as if there were a heavy weight on his head; you then pass your hands along his legs, to the extremity of his feet, and the drowsiness ceases;—you draw your fingers across and before his eyes, and he opens them without difficulty. If your patient be ignorant of the process of Magnetism, he cannot anticipate any such result. I repeat, that all these things are nothing, absolutely nothing, to a mere spectator. The variation in the pulse, during the continuance of magne-

tical action, has sometimes appeared surprising to medical men; but they might attribute it to various simple causes,—such as a long repose, uneasiness, or merely to accident; and it can only be considered among the number of proofs, by him who has frequently observed that variation. In short, there is scarcely one among the extraordinary phenomena which we might be called upon to witness, that is not liable to be explained as a juggler's trick, or an artifice of empiricism; and, in truth, the antagonists of Magnetism have ever been studious to account for them in that manner. But when we magnetise personally, we acquire a certainty as to the effects; we notice their progression, we appreciate the attending circumstances, and we cannot be deceived as to the cause which has produced them. The only method, therefore, of obtaining positive conviction, is to resolve upon making experiments, with ingenuousness, with ease, and in silence.

I have already observed that a residence in the country is favourable to the success of such experiments; but if you are obliged to remain in town, do not attempt them, except upon persons who have never heard of magnetism,—who have confidence in you, and who are not in a condition of life so superior to your own, that you would feel any embarrassment or restraint in their presence. If you magnetise any one who observes you, and respecting whose opinion on this matter you are anxious, the fear of not succeeding will impede your action and probably render your success very trifling.

Above all things, avoid magnetising females who only labour under very slight indispositions; or those persons who merely wish to try Magnetism from a motive of curiosity, to ascertain whether they will feel any thing in consequence of it. If you magnetise one of your friends, it should be done from a desire to render him service, in case he wishes it and promises not to mention the subject, at least until the cure has been effected. Always keep in mind, that if there be any circumstance which inspires you with apprehension or impatience, your

action will be null, and you will daily become more and more incapable of producing any effects⁽²⁵⁾.

Medical men have every possible facility of making experiments, either in hospitals, or upon insulated patients; they can magnetise without exciting any suspicion of what they are doing, under the pretence of ascertaining the condition of the patient, or of performing some necessary frictions. They would be sure of acquiring information by this method; but they must act with perfect simplicity, and wait until they have multiplied their experiments, before they allow themselves to reason upon the effects they may have produced.

I have thus suggested the means by which we may convince ourselves, as to the reality of magnetical action: they are infallible, and within the reach of every person; nothing more is necessary, than scrupulously to follow the path which I have traced. I have insisted upon a trial of six weeks; but if there be a sincere desire, and if circumstances should co-operate, success may be anticipated from the very first moment.

There are some individuals endowed with a very powerful magnetical faculty, whose action is instantaneous, upon persons of great susceptibility, or who are naturally in affinity with them⁽²⁶⁾; and there have been instances of others, who had never before magnetised, producing very remarkable effects even in the first attempt. This, however, is of rare occurrence⁽²⁷⁾; and I therefore thought it necessary to lay down such rules, that any one having strictly observed them would be justified in denying the reality of magnetical action, if they proved unsuccessful.

Any person, in whom the proofs I have collected shall have inspired confidence, may make a trial of Magnetism in the circle of his own family; but proper opportunities must be selected;—nor ought we to be surprised if the first attempts should not answer our expectations. It is merely requisite that we act with simplicity, without proposing to ourselves the solution of a problem, nor wishing to behold singular phenomena; and that we be solely

actuated by the desire to relieve a suffering friend or relation. Our benevolent exertions will then assuredly be rewarded, sooner or later.

In stating the conditions requisite for magnetising with efficacy, I have advanced a principle upon which I conceive it necessary to be urgent: it is relative to the subordination of our belief to volition. This principle, deduced from facts, has never been distinctly promulgated by any of those who have written upon the subject of Magnetism; an omission which, by leaving something mystical in the doctrine, has given rise to strong objections against it, and has deterred several persons from making those experiments which were necessary for their information. Belief has been described as a preliminary condition; and the precepts have even been summed up in these two words, *believe* and *desire*. This however is not correct: in the first place, it is not *believe* and *desire* that should have been said, but on the contrary, *desire* and *believe*. The act of Volition is indispensable, for we employ our faculties only in proportion as we *will* the exercise of them:—besides, there are a thousand examples of persons who have produced magnetical effects previously to any belief; and if it were otherwise, a sceptic could never be convinced by his own experience.

The Marquis de Puységur informs us that he himself, after having attended the course of lectures in which Mesmer unfolded his doctrine to a hundred pupils, had not yet acquired a full belief; and that the greater part of his fellow students were equally as incredulous as himself*. Nevertheless, as soon as they had determined to try experiments, they succeeded beyond their expectations.

I am aware that he who fluctuates in doubt cannot produce such powerful effects, as he who firmly believes; because the influence of doubt will distract his attention, and obstruct the free and energetic exercise of volition; and because the solicitude with which he will enquire into the results, must prevent him from

* See *Animal Magnetism considered in its relation with several branches of physical science* (29).

being sufficiently occupied with the necessary means for obtaining them. When, however, we operate in the best way we can, our action will always be sufficiently obvious to produce conviction.

In the language of the most precise analysis, the precepts for magnetising may be thus comprehended :

Touch the diseased attentively, with a desire to relieve them ; and let not that desire be distracted by any other idea.

Then all discussions, respecting the means of being convinced, may be reduced to this maxim : *have the will, and the belief must follow.*

Now, supposing a man to be already convinced, I shall proceed to point out, as the sequel to what has been already said, the course he ought to pursue towards unbelievers.

When you have yourself witnessed any extraordinary facts, if you relate them to people who never saw any thing analogous to them, they will not believe you, and their disbelief will be greater in proportion as those facts wear an extraordinary appearance. Be contented, therefore, with simply asserting your persuasion that Magnetism has a real action ; prevail upon some diseased persons to allow a trial of its efficacy being made upon them ; invite those who wish for information, and to settle their opinion upon the subject, to make an attempt themselves at magnetising ; instruct them in its principles, in its process, and direct them in its practice. Instead of announcing any great effects to them, manage it so that they may see much more than they expected.

Above all things, guard against the temptation of shewing Somnambulists to persons who have no belief in Magnetism ; for you will not convince them by that means, but only expose yourself to the most unpleasant perplexity, and the Somnambulists to much inconvenience.

If you suffer yourself to be influenced by the desire of exhibiting astonishing phenomena, observe what will happen :

In the first place, it is very possible that, on the day appointed for the display of such phenomena, all your experiments may

fail, from a variety of causes. Your Somnambulist may not, at that time, be well disposed as a subject for experiments⁽²⁹⁾;—the anxious desire, on your part, to produce striking effects, will dissipate your attention, and prevent you from acting with that simplicity, that confidence and that unforced spontaneous energy, which are necessary for success;—the presence of strangers may perhaps be uncommonly troublesome to your Somnambulist; that of persons evidently malevolent, or even of mere unbelievers, may disturb him, turn aside the natural course of his sensations and ideas, irritate his nerves perhaps, and almost certainly obstruct the experiments;—lastly, the spectators, or at least some among them, not being aware of the importance of such rules of conduct as you may have prescribed, will not adhere exactly to them, but on the contrary render themselves incapable of observing correctly, by the very precautions they will take for minutely examining every thing.

Suppose, in the second place, that all your experiments have succeeded. It will then be attempted to explain the magnetical effects, by other causes than those which have really produced them; the sincerity of your Somnambulists will be questioned; many things will be attributed to their imagination; it will be believed that you are their dupe, or perhaps be thought that, from a fear of being baffled, you endeavour to give a marvellous appearance to things which are in themselves of little consequence. Although it may not perhaps be exactly said that you wish to impose, it will be insinuated that you are self-deluded, or that you are an enthusiast; the spectators will affect to find nothing surprising in the very phenomena which has excited astonishment even in yourself; and they will conclude by pitying you, if they esteem your general character, or by openly laughing at you, if you have not already inspired them with a considerable degree of respect⁽³⁰⁾. Should it happen that conviction is produced in the mind of any one of those who witnessed the magnetical effects, that conviction will not be of long duration; he will soon begin to talk of having seen some

very singular things, but which he cannot comprehend ; and he will conclude by thinking no more about the subject, or by considering the whole merely as an amusing spectacle. If a somnambulist should reason upon any disease, some mistake will be noticed in what he says concerning a point of anatomy or of physiology ;—if he suggests any remedy, it will be affirmed that it is a popular one and well known ;—if he discover any complaint, it will be ascribed to mere chance ;—if he obey any expression of the magnetiser's will, though that expression be only *mental*, it will be said that there was either some previous concert between the parties, or that, at least, the magnetiser's intention was communicated by some gesture, or other means ;—if he should walk with his eyes closed, and yet avoid every obstacle, it would be maintained that he saw, even though there were a bandage over them ;—and if, among the questions put to him, one in ten should receive a wrong answer, that would be sufficient to prevent any notice from being taken of all the rest.

Even the best somnambulists are limited in their faculties : they have a clear and distinct perception only of what concerns their own state ; they judge entirely according to the sensations they experience, and reason justly, only in proportion as their attention is directed to a small number of objects ;—whenever they are fatigued or teased, they become confused and wandering. When they have a consciousness of being observed, or when too much urged to answer questions, they are liable sometimes to speak without reflection ; for they are not free from vanity, and do not wish to appear ignorant of what is asked ⁽³¹⁾.

Enquire throughout the whole history of Animal Magnetism ; consult the most experienced magnetisers, and you will find that they have always repented when they exhibited extraordinary phenomena to persons who were not previously convinced. This has not arisen from any malevolence on the part of those who witnessed the facts ; but because they wished to make their experiments upon somnambulists, as they would upon electrical

machines, or the loadstone ; forgetting that somnambulists are animated beings, possessing an extreme susceptibility, and whom the slightest contradiction will sometimes disorganize⁽³²⁾. Besides, the incredulous are justified in doubting what they only casually behold : we should be exposed to the admission of every fanciful theory, if we did not take the greatest precautions, and examine facts with the utmost distrust. It has been justly said, that *a falsehood is always more probable than a miracle* ; and when, therefore, a fact is announced to us which appears miraculous, we are not wrong if, in the first instance, we believe it to be false⁽³³⁾.

Let it be recollected also that men who are devoted to scientific studies, and especially those who have acquired a great reputation, are naturally reluctant to enquire into facts which appear contrary to received opinions. They are apprehensive of committing themselves, and of passing for dupes : not that such motives would prevent them from giving their testimony in the cause of truth, but they tend to make them extremely distrustful, and prevent them from bringing, to the examination of phenomena which are contradictory to their own ideas, that disposition of mind necessary for a candid and impartial investigation. In general, men of great information, and especially men of science, find more than common difficulty in becoming magnetisers ; but when once convinced, they are among the firmest apostles of truth, and best qualified to develope it, purified from all errors : the first step is for them the most difficult, because it requires a great effort, to suspend their previous notions and to listen simply to the voice of nature, instead of endeavouring to refer the phenomena to such physical laws as are already known to them. Hence it is that more magnetisers are found among men of moderate information, than among those of a superior degree of knowledge : the latter are, besides, afraid of losing time ; and can hardly be prevailed upon to sacrifice a few hours, in order to examine what is related to them by men who are their inferiors in general knowledge and

intellectual capacity. People of simple habits, who are strangers to all bias from systematical ideas, and who possess a correct but unassuming judgment, are the best disposed to adopt truths of a different description to those with which they are already acquainted.

Although I have traced the path by which single individuals may attain a certainty of opinion with respect to Magnetism, yet I should be embarrassed if asked to describe the means by which a scientific body might be likewise convinced. This requires to be explained; for it is far from my intention to insinuate that such a body would not sincerely seek the truth.

I will imagine then, that a scientific society appoints commissioners to examine the effects of Magnetism. I doubt not that these commissioners, animated with a desire to justify the confidence reposed in them, will make every effort to obtain information; but what is most likely to happen may be easily foreseen. Instead of acting with confidence and simplicity; instead of noting down the results as they occur, in order afterwards to compare them with each other, they will attempt experiments and vary them in a thousand different ways, with a view chiefly to discover the cause of a supposed delusion; their attention must of course be divided, and their faculty of volition exerted without energy; and consequently they can produce only very uncertain effects, which, instead of dispelling their doubts, will more probably increase them⁽²¹⁾. Besides, we cannot give faith to ourselves:—he who enquires for his personal satisfaction already possesses a commencement of belief, which disposition is favourable to success; but they who are commissioned to enquire for the satisfaction of others, think it essential, in the first instance, to have neither belief nor confidence, and that they should surrender themselves to their sentiments only after they have witnessed indubitable effects. Impressed with this idea, men of candour and integrity are likely to neglect the most necessary conditions for the attainment of success; and in applying the processes of Magnetism, they may

probably notice none of its effects, or at least see nothing sufficiently convincing to make them venture upon communicating it to others*.

Hence it happens that the belief in Magnetism cannot diffuse itself in the same way that the belief in vaccination and in galvanism has done. The conviction of the public must be preceded by that of a considerable number of individuals, who, successively and in various places, will silently endeavour to produce all the good in their power, and who will find in the satisfaction resulting from success a motive sufficiently strong to induce others to try the same means.

* In every science of which the theory is not well known, the success of any experiment cannot be depended upon, because it is uncertain whether it may not fail for want of attending to some necessary condition; hence a negative experiment proves nothing. I shall make myself better understood, by citing an example to which this principle applies.

I will suppose that when Franklin made, in America, his admirable discoveries relative to electricity, it was a subject which had not until then occupied the public mind in Europe; and that one of those persons who exhibit experiments in natural philosophy, as a show, had brought from Philadelphia an electrical machine, announcing, at the same time, the effects it was to produce. The curious, who witnessed those effects, would have related such marvellous phenomena that men of science must have entirely disbelieved them; but when, at length, the discovery had excited considerable attention, they would find themselves compelled to take notice of the matter. I will further suppose that commissioners, appointed by some learned society, required of this man a special meeting for the purpose of prosecuting their investigations; and that he, though very expert in the use of the electrical machine, was notwithstanding ignorant of the power of iron rods, to attract the electrical fluid. Our learned men are all assembled, and one of them happens to have in his hand some pointed iron instrument, which he places on a table, a few inches distant from the conductor. The man sets the glass plate of his machine into motion,—forms a chain of his spectators,—endeavours to charge the Leyden jar,—to inflame combustible materials,—to make his bells chime,—to set into motion a variety of little figures, &c.; but nothing succeeds. The commissioners may perhaps have remarked some kind of effects, but they are so unimportant compared to those which were promised, that they disdain to enquire

CHAPTER III.

Of the magnetical fluid, and the means by which magnetical action is produced.

ACCORDING to Mesmer, Magnetism consists in a movement impressed upon that universal fluid which is the medium of a reciprocal influence between all existing bodies.

The existence of a fluid which fills all space, and penetrates every corporeal substance, cannot be doubted; but we know nothing, either of its nature or its action. Is such a fluid identical with the one which constitutes *light*?—Does it exist single of its description, but variously modified by the spiracles of matter through which it passes?—Is it compounded of several different fluids?—Are electricity, caloric, mineral-magnetism, the nervous fluid, &c. modifications of it?—Can it be accumulated, condensed, or reflected?—Is it subjected to the laws of gravity?—What constitutes its appropriate motion, and what are the causes which direct that motion? We possess no information upon all these points; nor shall we probably ever acquire any knowledge respecting them.

into their cause. They retire and leave the operator in the greatest consternation. When alone, he recommences his process, and all the customary results take place. His imagination is bewildered; he suspects, probably, that there may be some individuals whose presence impedes the action of the machine; but I leave any one to judge what kind of report the commissioners would make of the discovery, and how long a time it would require before the erroneous notions, thus excited, could be rectified.—I hope this short apologue will be excused; but it conveys nearly the exact history of what must often have happened to those who wished to display the phenomena of Magnetism in the presence of unbelievers, and even of what did happen when the commissioners went to the house of M. D'Esion in order to examine into the reality of that doctrine.

In the examination of Mesmer's theory, therefore, the question was not whether there is a fluid diffused throughout all nature; but whether such a thing exists as a modification of this or of any particular fluid, which *man* can subject to his will and direct at his own pleasure. Mesmer maintained the affirmative, but it must be confessed that he did not sufficiently prove it; those proofs, indeed, could be established only by facts, and when he published his discovery those facts were not yet known.

We are indebted to magnetical somnambulists for all the knowledge we have acquired respecting this fluid. It is still a question, whether it be a modification of some universal fluid; but that it actually exists can hardly be doubted.

The greater number of somnambulists perceive a luminous and brilliant fluid surround their magnetiser and issue with greater force from his head and hands. They acknowledge that man has the power of accumulating this fluid at pleasure, of giving to it any determinate direction, and of impregnating with it various substances. It has been perceived by several; not only while they were in the state of somnambulism, but even some minutes after they awoke⁽³⁵⁾;—it appears odorous and fragrant to them, and communicates a peculiar flavour to water and to alimentary substances⁽³⁶⁾. There are individuals who have some perception of this fluid when they are magnetised, although they be not somnambulists: there are even several who perceive it when magnetising other persons, and I have myself met with such instances; but they are extremely rare.

The greater number of somnambulists distinguish different qualities in the fluid issued from different individuals; they tell us that it is less luminous, more dense⁽³⁷⁾, and that it issues with less velocity from individuals whose health is impaired; they sometimes consider it as morbid, and advise that we should clear ourselves of it, or cause it to be removed by others, after having magnetised persons afflicted with certain internal diseases; for the same reason, they feel a strong repugnance to

touch the clothes, or even a handkerchief belonging to any such person, because of the offensive fluid with which such substances appear to be impregnated⁽³⁸⁾.

They believe that this fluid can be collected and concentrated in a *reservoir*⁽³⁹⁾; that it exists in trees; and that the will of the magnetiser, assisted with a motion of the hand several times repeated in one direction⁽⁴⁰⁾, is sufficient to impress it with a constant and uniform movement in that direction.

It appears also that the operator's action⁽⁴¹⁾, when magnetising a tree, or forming a chain of several individuals, sets this fluid into circulation (whatever may be the cause), nearly in the same manner as a spark sets fire to combustible matter; and that the fluid which the magnetiser accumulates does not emanate wholly from himself.

Steel or glass rods, of a conical form, serve in a magnetiser's hand as conductors of the fluid. All substances, however, are not equally good conductors; there are some even, such as copper, which communicate a bad quality to the fluid⁽⁴²⁾.

This fluid is not identical with the electric; or, if both the one and the other be modifications of a universal fluid, those modifications are totally dissimilar,—for the greater part of somnambulists have an antipathy to electricity⁽⁴³⁾.

As I have obtained this intelligence from all the somnambulists whom I have consulted, and as similar information has been given by them to magnetisers in every other country, I am compelled to admit the existence of a magnetical fluid, and to acknowledge that we possess the means of communicating, accumulating, and directing it. Hence, whenever I speak of the processes and of the action of magnetism, I shall not hesitate to employ the word *fluid*. If, however, any persons chuse to attribute that action to other causes, it will not prevent the same results being always produced from the indicated process: a simple theory, uncontradicted by positive facts, is useful in fixing our ideas; but it is not necessary for conveying the power to act.

Most persons, who are magnetised, feel an unusual sensation of heat or of cold, when the magnetiser's hand is passed before them, although without contact, and this sensation is experienced even through the clothes; whence it can scarcely be doubted that it is produced by the passage of the fluid. There are several experiments which seem to prove that the magnetical fluid is reflected by looking-glasses, and hence some analogy might be inferred between it and light; but then, the property which it possesses, of penetrating opaque bodies, proves that the analogy is not perfect in all its parts.

Though it is very difficult to explain how the magnetical fluid can operate from one apartment of a house to another, yet almost every magnetiser is convinced of the fact. I have myself made experiments which tend to prove it. This phenomenon however, being among the number of those which appear to me inconceivable, I would invite magnetisers to make some further inquiries into it, and not to confide in its truth until they have verified, by their own experiments, those facts which seem to establish it⁽⁴⁴⁾.

It is however to be remarked that both light and sound are conveyed to very great distances, without our being able to comprehend, in the moving power by which they are impelled, an energy sufficiently considerable to carry them, with rapidity, through the different substances which they have to traverse. Whether we consider light as an actual emanation from luminous bodies, or only as a vibratory motion impressed upon the ethereal element, still it is equally difficult to understand how the light of a candle, or of a burning coal, makes itself instantaneously visible at a great distance, through transparent bodies; or how the light of a star reaches our eyes⁽⁴⁵⁾. Perhaps those phenomena, to the reality of which we refuse our assent because we have not attentively observed them, are not more incomprehensible than others, which excite no astonishment in us, in consequence of our being daily familiar with them.

It will doubtless be urged, that the existence of magnetical fluid, whether as a modification of universal fluid, or as one of a particular nature, may be acknowledged without at the same time concluding that man possesses the faculty of giving a determinate direction to this fluid, and of thus employing a substance imperceptible to all our senses, as the means of producing a physical action upon his fellow-creatures.

I admit that it is impossible to establish, by reasoning, that man is gifted with such a faculty; but the question is one of fact, and must be solved by experience. All magnetisers direct the magnetical fluid by an act of volition, assisted by a few motions of the hands; therefore it is the will that impels the fluid.

What is the reason of it?—This I cannot answer. It constitutes a primitive fact; and primitive facts may be observed and authenticated, but they can never be explained. Do we more clearly understand how an act of volition enables us to move our arm? or how an idea, which is excited in our minds, imparts to us the power of performing voluntary motions?—These phenomena belong to that mysterious communication between the body and the soul, which all physiologists have acknowledged to be inexplicable. But there is a great analogy between the latter phenomenon, and that which produces magnetical action; and although I do not mean to affirm that they are the same thing, yet I may be permitted to demonstrate the analogy.

When my will is directed towards the performance of any act, I convey to my external organs a power adequate to its execution. This power originates in the brain, which is the organ of thought; and it is, most evidently, my will which sends it forth, which moderates and which directs it. I say that I send forth the necessary quantity of power to execute my will: this requires explanation.

I suppose that two covered vessels are placed before me, and that I am required to lift them successively, being previously informed that the one is empty and the other filled with mercury: I

further suppose that they were mistaken in describing to me the two vessels, and that they pointed out as an empty one that which was full: the following would be the consequence of this mistake. While reaching my hand towards the vessel which is full, but which I believe to be empty, I imagine that it may weigh one pound, and I accordingly send, from my brain to my hand, the quantity of strength which is necessary to raise such a weight. I then experience a resistance; I do not lift the vessel, and I perform a second act of volition, in order to convey to my arm the requisite power of execution. If on the contrary I place my hand, in the first instance, upon the empty vessel, but which I believe to contain the mercury and whose weight I calculate at fifty pounds, I convey to my hand a quantity of power corresponding with this calculation; and it will happen that I lift the vessel as high as my arm can extend, in consequence of communicating to it an impulse fifty times greater than was actually required. If I am ignorant of the weight of both the vessels, then I proceed with hesitation, and it is only by degrees that I convey the strength necessary for lifting them. Therefore, it is clearly by an act of volition that I direct, from my brain to my hand, that greater or less, but still determinate quantity of power which may be required; and if we remember that our arm is, from its construction, a lever very difficult to set in motion, the degree of strength actually employed must appear very considerable: still however it is limited, and its intensity is not the same in different individuals.

I perform precisely the same operation when I magnetise. By an impulsion of my will, I convey the fluid to the extremity of my hands; by the same act of volition, I impress it with a determinate direction, which communicates the motion of my fluid to that of the diseased person. Nothing prevents me from emitting it; but there may be, in the individual upon whom I act, some obstacle which prevents the effects I intend to produce; and then I experience a greater or less resistance, in the

same manner as when I employ my strength to lift a burden that is too heavy : this resistance may even be invincible.

The magnetical fluid is continually escaping from us, and it forms an atmosphere round our bodies, which, having no determinate direction, does not perceptibly act upon the individuals who are about us ; but, when it is impelled and guided by our will, it moves forward with the whole of that force which we have imparted to it, like the luminous rays which issue from ignited substances. The principle which sets it in action exists in our soul, in the same way as that which communicates strength to our arm ; and its nature is similar.

It does not follow, however, that this fluid may not, like that of electricity and the magnet, be subjected to laws of attraction, of repulsion, and of affinity, with which we are unacquainted. In traversing certain bodies, it conveys emanations from them ; but the gravity of those bodies is not sensibly diminished by this, any more than they are by odoriferous emanations.

The phenomena observed in magnetism appear to arise from two causes, namely, the action of the human will, and that of the fluid, which is the instrument employed by volition.

These principles being admitted, all the phenomena may be explained by one single law. Let us pause for a moment, to consider the modifications of that law.

We have said that three principal conditions are requisite, in order to magnetise ;—volition, actuated by a benevolent motive, —belief in our power,—and confidence in the exercise of it.

Let us first explain why the direction of the will towards doing good is an essential condition. I know not whether it be possible to *will* evil with the same energy, as we can employ when exerting that faculty to a benevolent purpose, nor would there be any utility in examining such a question here : it is sufficient to observe, that, if my will were inclined towards the injury of the person upon whom I intended to act, it would be repelled by him as soon as he became sensible of its action. It has sometimes happened, that persons who

magnetised merely for the sake of trying an experiment, or for amusement, have acted powerfully upon others who were extremely susceptible; but the result of that action has been, almost uniformly, to produce a perturbation in the nervous system.

Faith is necessary, because a person who does not believe in the possibility of producing an effect, can never employ the necessary power with constancy, and in a natural manner.

The same reasoning applies to confidence, without which we shall only fatigue ourselves, while our action remains imperfect.

An active will supposes also an unremitted attention; for without such attention, we can never direct steadily and uniformly our will towards the proposed object.

Let us now say a few words respecting the instrument through the means of which volition exerts itself, in the act of Magnetism, and respecting the use of that instrument.

When we have the intention to magnetise, it is necessary, in the first place, to establish an affinity⁽⁴⁶⁾ between the parties; which can only be done by immediate contact, and for this reason. In order that the fluid which issues from me should act upon the person whom I magnetise, there must be a union of the two fluids, which should also receive a similar tone of movement⁽⁴⁷⁾. If I *touch* with a determined will and with attention, and if the person upon whom I intend to act be in a passive state, then the movement of that person's fluid will be regulated by the movement of my own. In such a case, that which occurs resembles what happens between a piece of iron touched with the load-stone, and one that is not; when the former is repeatedly passed along the latter, in a uniform direction, it communicates its movement or attractive power. This is not intended as an explanation, but merely as a comparison.

More or less time may be requisite for establishing an affinity, according as more or less analogy naturally subsists between the two fluids; and according, also, as the person who magnetises has to exercise his action upon an individual who is more or less weak, relatively to himself, and who, by his physical and moral

dispositions, consequently opposes more or less resistance to that action.

The action is not perceptible upon an individual who is in a perfect state of health, because the fluid does not then meet with any obstacle to its free circulation, and in that case nature requires no additional supply of vital power.

The process tends to convey the fluid upon such or such part of the organization, and the fluid acts in proportion to the sensibility of the organ upon which it is so directed. Hence the different effects produced by different processes⁽⁴⁸⁾; and hence also the inconvenience of magnetising without having received any preliminary instruction. I shall hereafter resume this last subject.

The effects produced by Magnetism belong solely to nature, whose proper action is invigorated in the person magnetised, by the action of the magnetiser. These effects resemble those which spontaneously occur in the crises of various disorders; the only difference is, that the former are subjected to a regular and systematic progress: they do not always appear proportioned to the cause which has produced them; but it is well known that, in organized beings, the slightest concussion is sufficient to produce, under certain circumstances, the most astonishing revolutions. When the nerves are impregnated with a certain quantity of fluid, they acquire a degree of susceptibility of which no conception can be formed in any other state. Consider the individual who is magnetised as becoming, in some measure, a part of his magnetiser; and you will no longer be surprised that the will of the latter should act upon and determine every movement in the former. This is all that I can say upon the principle of magnetical action, and upon the influence of human will.

This explanation is likely to be judged somewhat hypothetical. I submit it however, until a better can be found, because it seems qualified for giving stability to our ideas upon the subject, and because it harmonizes with those results which have been hitherto ascertained. I shall not discuss the objections which might be opposed to it, for that would only divert our attention from

the principal object. They who wish to be convinced that they possess the faculty of relieving the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, and to ascertain the means of exerting that faculty, do not require a theory; it will be sufficient for them to observe facts. They will not have magnetised long, before they perceive that the effects of Magnetism depend upon the energy of volition. I shall now indicate the processes, which may be adopted in order to give a proper direction to magnetical action.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the processes employed in magnetising.

THERE are three distinct schools relative to the doctrine of Magnetism ; that of Mesmer, that of the Marquis de Puységur, and that of the *spiritualists*. These three schools differ both as to the theory and process. They may be compared to the three principal schools of the philosophers of antiquity : that of Mesmer is founded upon a system analogous to the Epicurean, such as it is portrayed in the fine verses of Lucretius ; that of the spiritualists, which has had many partisans at Lyon, in Prussia and in Germany, resembles the Platonic philosophy ; while the system of M. de Puységur rests solely upon observation.

Mesmer admits the existence of a universal fluid, which fills all space, and which is the medium of communication between all bodies : he admits, as Epicurus did, a subtile matter, emanations, &c.

The spiritualists believe that all the phenomena are produced by an immediate action of the soul, and that the physical action is almost useless.

M. de Puységur acknowledges a physical action, in which the soul interposes by the power of volition, and requiring the

assistance of practical processes, which are taught us by experience alone.

These three schools are not antagonists of each other; they are not even rivals, as the schools of philosophy were: in each of them, notwithstanding the diversity of theory and practice which prevails, similar results are always obtained.

Mesmer, in consequence of the theory he adopted, has laid down principles which constitute Magnetism a particular science: he imagines poles to exist in the human body;—in the fluid, streams susceptible of acceleration and of direction in their movement;—in diseases, a defect of harmony, or some obstacle to the circulation of the fluid; and in the various crises produced, he perceives the means of cure. He believes that this fluid can be accumulated and concentrated; that it is reflected by mirrors; that its movement can be impelled and propagated by sounds; and, in conformity to this theory, he reduces the practice of Magnetism to certain systematic rules, the application of which would require much preliminary instruction.

The spiritualists, on the other hand, maintain that every thing depends upon volition. After having established an affinity, in order to settle their attention upon a determinate object, they consider all further manual process as unnecessary: they act intellectually, by mental intention, by prayer, &c.

The Marquis de Puységur employs immediate contact, and varies the process according to circumstances. He admits neither the theory of poles, nor that of planetary action; he acknowledges the potency of volition, but he believes that in order to direct its action, it is necessary to operate physically upon the diseased person, and even upon the afflicted parts*.

* It must not be concluded from what I have said, that M. de Puységur had any intention to promulgate a system of his own: he limits himself, merely, to the progressive exposition of those opinions which facts suggested to him; and it is only from his practice, and that of his pupils, that we can form any judgment of his theory.

It may easily be supposed that there are many magnetisers who, without especially enlisting themselves in either of these schools, adopt something from each. It is, however, in the three classes which I have enumerated that every one of those who embrace any determinate theory must be included.

I do not pretend to decide between the respective merits of the three schools; but, if I must declare my own sentiments, I confess that I rank myself among the number of M. de Puy-ségur's disciples. The theory of Mesmer is obscure; it appears, to me, to be in contradiction with the generally-admitted principles of natural philosophy, and I think it lies open to many objections. I admit that a universal fluid may be the cause of the most important phenomena in nature, and also that this fluid may be assimilated to that which produces light; but, when this supposition is conceded, we are still no better enabled to comprehend how man should possess the power of directing the fluid and of conveying his magnetical action at considerable distances. What affinity can there be, between the reciprocal influence of the stars and the influence of man upon his fellow-creatures? Mesmer recognises the existence of poles in the human body: be it so;—but he adds that these poles may be changed at pleasure. How then are they to be discovered? If they be not fixed, is it not as if they had no existence?

With regard to the spiritualists, I do not understand their theory; it appears to me nearly allied to illusion; and though I do not doubt the immateriality of the soul, still I am equally of opinion that it is only by physical means we can act upon organized bodies (⁴⁹).

I have already observed that all magnetisers obtain nearly the same results, whatever may be their theory. Mesmer, and the spiritualists of Lyon, have equally performed cures and produced somnambulists; but I believe that Mesmer prescribes certain processes which are wholly unnecessary, and that the system of the spiritualists leads to erroneous notions;

while, on the contrary, the processes of M. de Puységur are simple and rest upon one primary fact, which is certainly incomprehensible, but at the same time established by observation and experience, and the explanation of which it is useless to seek.

Although I class myself among the number of M. de Puységur's disciples, and acknowledge the general accuracy of his principles, yet I do not entirely agree with him as to the most appropriate means of directing the magnetical action. He does not seem to attach any importance to the selection of particular processes; he thinks that it is sufficient to touch a diseased person, or to present the hand before him, in order to produce the most salutary effects, and that the hand is instinctively guided towards the affected part. I am aware that the opinion of a man who has practised Magnetism for such a length of time, and with so much success, must be of great weight; yet I cannot concur in that opinion. I have, on my side, personal experience, the instructions of every somnambulist whom I have consulted, the advice given by the somnambulists of Strasburgh, by those of M. Tardy, and even by several of M. de Puységur's; all of whom have pointed out processes, which vary according to circumstances. The Marquis de Puységur is apprehensive lest, by establishing a theory on this subject, Magnetism should be converted into an art, and we might be led to believe that the processes possessed in themselves an efficacy, independent of any desire to relieve the patient. This would doubtless be an error; but it does not follow, that because they are only of secondary importance, and the means of directing an agent without which they could produce no effect, they are therefore incapable of any special influence. M. de Puységur pays the less attention to them, because long continued habit, which has become in him a sort of instinct, directs him in his practice, and because the energy of his intention is so great that it predominates over every thing else. But, in general, I think that they who magnetise patients, with-

out producing the state of somnambulism, ought to adopt manual processes of selection, among the means which they employ ; for, were a theory of those processes to answer no other purpose than that of fixing the magnetiser's attention, it would so far be useful⁽⁵⁰⁾.

The advice, which I am about to give, is therefore the result of my own experience and of facts which I have carefully collected : should I be deceived, either in admitting M. de Puységur's theory, or in modifying it occasionally, no practical inconvenience can be the consequence.

When you have the desire to relieve any person disordered in his health, place yourself opposite to him, in such a manner that your knees and feet may mutually touch. Take hold of his thumbs, and remain in that position until you perceive that yours and his have nearly the same degree of heat *. Next, fix both hands upon his shoulders, and keep them there for two or three minutes ; then bring them down the patient's arms, and take hold of his thumbs as before : repeat this process three or four times. Afterwards, place your hands upon the stomach, so that both thumbs may rest upon the *plexus solaris*⁽⁵¹⁾, and the other fingers on the sides. When you feel a communication of heat, bring down your hands as far as the knees ; then place them on the summit of the head, and bring them down as far as the knees again, or even to the feet ; continue in this manner, always observing to turn off your hands from the patient, every time you have to bring them up towards the head. This precaution, of never magnetising from the extremities upwards, and of removing the hands from the body before we return towards the head or the superior parts, has always appeared to me a very essential one.

I ought to explain, here, some of the technical expressions

* I know not why the magnetical action is communicated more easily by the thumbs, than in any other manner ; but the fact has been well ascertained by experience.

employed by magnetisers, and of which I shall have myself to make use. .

To *establish an affinity*, with a person whom you are about to magnetise, consists in *touching* him the first time with his own consent⁽⁵²⁾; and, in order to establish an affinity between him and any other person, it is sufficient to touch them both at the same time⁽⁵³⁾. I do not believe it possible to establish an affinity with any one against his consent; and hence it would follow, that no person could be magnetised in defiance of his opposition to it⁽⁵⁴⁾. But when the affinity has been previously established, and when the crisis of Somnambulism has been easily produced on several successive days, it will then be sufficient, in order to reproduce it, that the magnetiser should approach the person and merely exert his volition to that effect. If the person over whom you have obtained this sort of ascendancy should attempt to resist your action, he will only impede it for a time, without being able ultimately to prevent it; and he will do himself more or less injury. The affinity gradually weakens, as we cease to occupy ourselves with the person we have magnetised: it lasts a greater or less time, in proportion as it is stronger or weaker, and according to the length of time elapsed since it commenced. Sometimes it cannot be destroyed by any other means than a special exertion of the magnetiser's volition, to that effect⁽⁵⁵⁾.

Let us now resume the explanations.

To make a *pass*, implies the act of passing the hand over the body or any part of it. When the hands are conducted from the summit of the head, along the arms, to the ends of the fingers; or along the body, to the extremities of the feet, this process is called *magnetising in full stream*⁽⁵⁶⁾. I am confident the latter can never produce the smallest injury to the patient, and therefore it is that I advise its application in the first instance; waiting, meanwhile, until circumstances indicate the utility of any other process.

Act in such a manner that your *passes* may be distinct from

each other. Instead of descending so low as the feet, which might be tiresome, you can stop at the knees; but you must, in that case, and before you terminate, make several *passes* along the legs and feet. When you touch, do it lightly and slowly; guiding your hand at the distance of about two inches from the face, and using contact at first upon the clothes. Employ no muscular power in directing the magnetical action: let all your motions take place with ease and flexibility. Your hand should not be held stiffly; but, on the contrary, your fingers should be slightly bent, as it is principally by their extremities that the magnetical fluid escapes. Continue to magnetise for about three quarters of an hour: as it is indispensable that the attention should be sustained without interruption, it might be wearied by a prolongation of the process. Let no hesitation accompany your operations, nor feel anxious as to their effects; act with confidence and with ease; do not strain either your attention or your will, but surrender yourself wholly to the sentiment of pity, and to the desire of procuring relief. If your patient should feel pain in any particular part, let your hand remain upon it for some time, and then bring it downwards, as if to draw the pain along with it. Should such pain be in the head, you may often remove it by directing your hands from the head to the feet, and by making *passes* repeatedly over the legs*. In terminating the process, you will always be careful to diffuse the magnetical fluid over the whole body, in order that a proper equilibrium may be maintained⁽⁵⁷⁾.

I have advised that, in the first instance, the process of *magnetising in full stream* should be employed, and for this reason. It sometimes happens that the magnetical action, concentrated upon the pit of the stomach or upon the head, is too powerful, and that it may disturb some natural crisis. This is particularly

* Several things will be found repeated in this chapter, which I have already mentioned when speaking of the means to obtain conviction; but I have thought the repetition necessary, in order to comprise under one head whatever is relative to the processes of Magnetism.

subject to happen in women of great sensibility ; and examples of it may be found in the journals of M. Tardy. I am aware that this process of Magnetism produces more remarkable effects ; but it is sufficient that it has an injurious tendency, in particular cases, to induce us not to employ it without much caution. With regard to men, I do not think that the application of the hand upon the stomach can ever do them any harm ; and it may be employed, therefore, for the purpose of establishing an affinity, and also for impregnating the patient with the necessary quantity of magnetical fluid ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

When the affinity has been once properly established, immediate contact is no longer requisite. It often happens, indeed, that the action of distant Magnetism is more calming ⁽⁵⁹⁾ and salutary than that which is produced by contact. A person of my acquaintance was lately requested to touch a young man, afflicted with violent pains in the head and in the chest : he accordingly held his hands, during half an hour, upon the head and pit of the stomach ; but perceiving that he only augmented the pain, he discontinued. Half an hour afterwards, he tried to magnetise him without contact, and presented his hand at the distance of a few inches ;—observing that he still produced painful sensations, he removed to the distance of two feet ; the patient then became free from pain, and in five minutes he closed his eyes and fell into a magnetical sleep ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

The posture which I have described for magnetising is the most favourable to the action ; the more so as the magnetiser's look produces much effect,—if not the first day, at least after a few sittings. But this posture is not always possible, and often it would be an improper one.

Thus, for example, we cannot place ourselves opposite to a patient who is laying in bed : a lateral position must then be adopted, in any way which may be most convenient. You take hold of the thumbs, place your hands upon the shoulders, lay one hand upon the pit of the stomach, and draw it down from

the head to the feet. You may use only one hand, and the action will take place equally well.

I have made an observation respecting the impropriety, sometimes, of magnetising a person face to face. Thus, when we magnetise a female, we might feel ourselves embarrassed in such a position, and she would experience the same inconvenience. In such cases, therefore, we may simply sit down by her side, and place our two hands in opposition, one upon the pit of her stomach, and the other upon the back; the *passes* should then be made exclusively with the right hand, or else by drawing down both hands together, but always in opposition to each other.

In the practice of Magnetism, we cannot too studiously avoid any thing which might offend decorum, or be likely to alarm modesty.

But I have said enough with respect to the general mode of operating: more extensive instruction may be acquired by reading the works of the Marquis de Puységur and of M. Tardy de Montravel; and above all, from personal experience. There are however a multitude of particular processes, which are applicable according to circumstances; and I know, from experience, that a selection among these processes is not wholly indifferent. They are often suggested to the magnetiser, by the sensations which the patient experiences, and sometimes the patient himself will naturally point them out: it would be a tedious task to describe the whole, but I shall explain a few more of them ⁽⁶¹⁾.

The application of the hand is always proper, when you have to disperse any obstruction; and, in such cases, no inconvenience can arise from concentrating the magnetical action upon the diseased organ. To accomplish this, it is advisable to present the fingers collected into a point, and then to turn the hand, in order to excite an inward movement; after which, it may from time to time be guided downwards, to produce a stream or current in that direction.

In similar cases, and in every one which arises from any impediment to the free circulation of various fluids through the appropriate channels of the human body, a very active and efficacious process consists in breathing hot upon the diseased part: for that purpose, a white handkerchief may be put outside the clothes, and the magnetiser may breathe through the whole. A strong sensation of heat is thus produced; which is only mechanical at first, but which, when it has become magnetical, is much more active and penetrating. The same process may be successfully employed, in cases of pains in the chest, when they are occasioned by atony.

I have employed this method in treating tumours of the breast, by blowing through several folds of cotton, which were placed under the clothes upon the tumour. During the first days, I produced no other effect than a gentle heat; but it afterwards became so intense, that the patient was unable to bear it longer than a few moments, and almost immediately exclaimed, "*You burn me.*" The magnetical action produced by this process is sometimes too powerful, but that is soon perceived; and besides, it never need be employed but in cases where it is judged absolutely necessary, because it is very fatiguing to the magnetiser himself.

In cases of Megrims (*hemicrania*), I have sometimes observed great pain arise from concentrating the action upon the head; and that they could be removed by leaving the hands, for a little time, upon the pit of the stomach,—then upon the knees, and afterwards by making a great number of *passes* along the legs, to the extremity of the feet. When there is too great a determination of the blood towards the head, those *passes*, repeated over the legs, are always a means of relief (⁶²).

If, in magnetising, we should happen to transfuse too much of the magnetical fluid into the patient's head, we may always diminish that effect by blowing cold at some distance. This proceeding is often successful, also, in cases where there is much heat in that part.

If a head ache should be the consequence of any blow, it is proper to keep the hand applied to the head for a considerable time, to concentrate the action there; after which, the hand may be brought down repeatedly, in order to withdraw the blood and humours from that direction, and attract them towards the extremities. The duration and energy of our action must be in proportion to the length of time that has elapsed since the blow was received. In order to relieve or cure disorders of the eyes, one finger should be placed on the temple, and the thumbs be turned over the eyes. This process sometimes produces a strong heat in the eye, which would be injurious in cases of inflammation⁽⁶³⁾.

When the circulation is deranged in the female sex, or when they are attacked with cholics from this cause, the disorder may be removed by resting the hand upon the knees, and by making *passes* along the legs. The effect to be expected from this simple process is very quickly produced, if an affinity has been previously established. In such cases, however, as have been mentioned relatively to that sex, we should avoid keeping the hand too long upon the stomach.

I lately magnetised a lady whose health had been thus disordered for three months: after four sittings, of one hour each, the cause of her complaint was wholly removed. She did not inform me of this, at the time, and I continued to magnetise her on the following day, to the same effect. Seven or eight days afterwards, I heard that she felt an uneasiness respecting her health, but of an opposite description to the former one. I proposed to magnetise her again, which she declined, observing that the remedy had operated too powerfully; but I soon removed her apprehensions. On the occasion preceeding, I had kept my hand a considerable time on the knees, bringing it down along the legs; on the present, I merely let my hand remain on the pit of the stomach, and the symptoms which had alarmed her disappeared the same day. I relate this fact, to

show that a variation in the processes may produce a considerable one also in the result of magnetical action.

I have likewise remarked, that when there is any local pain occasioned by obstructed perspiration, it is beneficial to keep the hand a considerable time upon the part affected,—bringing it down at intervals, and resting a little at the joints. It has for example happened to me twenty times, in magnetising a person who had a pain in the shoulder, gradually to cause its descent; it stopped however at each of the joints; but, at length, when it reached the hands, it transuded through the fingers, by a very perceptible perspiration. This kind of perspiration is another very common result, after a number of *passes* have been made along the arms.

Some magnetisers employ the action of the head to invigorate that of the hands, by presenting the former to the patient's stomach; but this process is very fatiguing.

Pains in the loins are frequently subdued by passing the hand behind the back. For this purpose, you may either place yourself sideways, or being in front of the patient, pass both your hands under his arms to his back, and draw them down by each side towards the knees. Similar pains, in the female sex, may often be removed in that manner.

I shall say no more respecting the particular processes which are executed solely by the hands; but I have some general directions, of great importance, to give relatively to the application of Magnetism; I shall also add a few observations concerning different accessory means, which may contribute to strengthen the magnetical action.

When a crisis of any kind is produced by magnetical action, that crisis must never be interrupted; because such interruption would infallibly cause a perturbation, which might be productive of great injury. If the patient fall asleep, we should wait till he wakes of himself, and not suffer him to be touched by any person with whom he may not have been placed in affinity. A person thus suddenly waked out of a magnetical sleep, by one

not in affinity with him, is likely to be thrown into convulsive fits, which may return upon him for several days. This accident, which is always to be apprehended, when we consent to magnetise in the presence of unbelievers, is the more dangerous, because they who deny that the sleep has been produced by Magnetism, yet attribute the convulsions to its operation, instead of accusing their own imprudence; and they are eager to remove the magnetiser, whose perseverance alone can afford a remedy to such accidents.

It often happens that inexperienced magnetisers make violent efforts of volition; and that they overcharge the head and stomach, from a desire to produce powerful effects; but they only stun the patient by those means, which should be carefully avoided. We ought to magnetise calmly, patiently, with a steady uniform action, and leave nature to her own operations.

As far as it may be practicable, we should attend upon our patients at the same hour, each day.

When it is apparent that Magnetism has produced a decided action, it will be proper not to interrupt the treatment without great precaution, and to be guarded against every thing which might impede its effects. Both the magnetiser and the magnetised should avoid, during the treatment, every thing likely to excite violent emotions in either of them, or to disturb the peaceful progress of nature; in a word, avoid every thing which may interrupt tranquillity of mind, and produce a concussion in the nervous system⁽⁶⁴⁾.

When the magnetiser has been so fortunate as to obtain the crisis of Somnambulism, he is then relieved from all further anxiety, with respect to his process; but there are other precautions which he must carefully attend to. These I shall speak of hereafter, as the conduct to be observed towards somnambulists requires to be discussed in a separate chapter.

I have now to explain various practices by which the magnetical action may be invigorated.

Mesmer, in his first treatments, made great use of the *chain*,

of an apparatus called the *baquet*, of magnetised trees, and even of music. I shall deliver my opinion upon these auxiliary methods, observing that Mesmer was not the only one who employed them, but that they were sometimes adopted in the school of the Marquis de Puységur.

These means are not wholly without efficacy, but they are also accompanied with some inconveniences, and should not be employed except when there are many patients to be treated at the same time. If a magnetiser has only one patient under his care, they are of no use; his power is then sufficient, and acting by his own person, he will be better able to direct that action.

Let us first describe what is meant by the *chain*, and explain both its advantages and its inconveniences.

When several patients are assembled in one place, together with other well-intentioned persons, all of whom are favourable to the doctrine of Magnetism, the whole are made to form a ring, in such a manner that they touch each other by the knees and feet; besides which, they mutually take hold of thumbs, and there are some magnetisers who even desire them to press gently the thumb of their left-hand neighbour, when the one on their right-hand has done the same to them. The effect of this is to establish a succession of motions, in regular rotation, and thus to fix the attention of all. In the first instance, the magnetiser himself forms a link of the chain, by sitting down among the rest: if there should happen to be several magnetisers present, one of them ought to be selected as the chief, and all the others remain subordinate to him. At the expiration of about a quarter of an hour, the magnetical fluid is in full circulation, and its movement becomes accelerated; the patients, forming part of the chain, have a perception of the magnetical action; not only all of them feel its effects, but even it is sometimes perceptible to individuals who are free from any apparent disorder. Then, he who has taken the direction of this treatment separates himself from the chain, which closes again,

and he magnetises in succession all the individuals composing it. He bestows his attention, more particularly, upon the patient who seems most to require it, and gives up the care of the rest to the other magnetisers, each of whom directs the fluid upon such patients as are committed to him. This union of many persons considerably augments the magnetical action, and that action continues while the magnetiser reposes himself. A variety of slight complaints may be cured by the chain, without any other assistance, and the quantity of fluid which is absorbed by the patients sometimes disposes some of them to fall into the state of Somnambulism. If it be essential to admit into this chain only such persons as have a confidence in Magnetism, it is no less important that, during the operation, nothing should be suffered to occur which might divert their attention from the proposed object.

I shall here relate an anecdote, which will prove that means apparently indifferent in themselves may, under certain circumstances, produce very good effects. I magnetised, in a small town, a woman who, for seven years, had suffered the most excruciating pains; I shall not enter into any details of my process, nor of the success which I was so fortunate as to obtain, but shall merely mention a circumstance of the course I pursued. When I attended upon this woman, at the hour of seven in the evening, I usually found about ten or twelve men and women, who had finished their daily labour (either in the town itself or in the neighbouring fields) and all of whom felt an interest in her recovery, assembled at her house; these persons I formed into a chain, and said to them, "*My friends, put up your prayers to God, for the recovery of the patient;*" immediately they began to tell their beads, and that act of prayer produced a unity of intention which was followed by the most beneficial effects. I frequently saw some one of the chain intermit his responses, and fall asleep; and, in such cases, I always discovered that the sleep was the result of some indisposition in the individual. I hold no religious practices in contempt; but I consider

myself absolved from the necessity of replying to any ill-judged raillery, which might impute to me a belief that the cure was effected through the influence of the rosary (⁶⁵).

I have thus explained the advantages of the chain ; I will now speak of its inconveniences.

It is difficult, especially in a town-residence, to compose a chain which shall consist of individuals solely occupied with their own cure or with that of others ; and the presence of unbelievers, of persons who are anxious to meet with occasions for exerting a censorious disposition, and generally of all those whose intentions are not good, interrupts the action of Magnetism, and has an unfavourable influence upon its effects (⁶⁶). It is also difficult to maintain the requisite silence among them, and to excite in their minds the single consideration of the sufferings of the patients, and how they may be relieved. Among the persons who present themselves on such occasions, there may be some who are afflicted with contagious disorders, and whom it would be imprudent under such circumstances to admit into the chain ; it is necessary, therefore, to be previously acquainted with all the individuals by whom it is to be formed. If it happen that any one among the patients possesses so much susceptibility, that the magnetical action produces in him nervous fits, those fits would alarm the other patients and might even be communicated to them. When such effects are perceived, the individual must instantly be withdrawn from the chain, and the paroxysm separately allayed ; but it would be much better not to have incurred the risk of such an interruption.

The apparatus called (in French) a *baquet* answers a purpose similar to that of the chain. This denomination (which answers to a *tub*) was given, in Mesmer's time, to a round wooden box, containing pulverized glass, iron filings, and bottles filled with magnetised water, which are disposed in symmetrical order, and to which moveable conductors are adapted, for the purpose of directing the fluid.

There can be no doubt that the fluid is concentrated in this

receptacle; and that when it is so concentrated, it may receive determinate directions by the aid of those conductors. The virtue thus communicated to the *baquet* is felt, and continues to be diffused, in the absence of the magnetiser; it is maintained and reproduced nearly in the same manner as that of the magnet. The collection of several patients round the *baquet* is attended with similar advantages and disadvantages as the *chain*, but with some variation. The latter possesses more efficacy, because of the unity of intention; the former has less danger with respect to contagious disorders, because the patients are not in immediate contact with each other. A small *baquet*, or magnetical reservoir, may occasionally be employed in treating single patients; and it will often continue to operate when the patient is already saturated with the fluid.

Magnetised trees are preferable to the *baquet*, and it cannot be denied that, of all the means employed for invigorating the magnetical action, this is the most powerful and the most salutary; not because it has been proved that the trees possess in themselves any virtue, but because, when several persons assemble round them in the open air, they put a great quantity of fluid in circulation, which receives the direction and particular *tone* of movement which the magnetiser has determined in the fluid contained in the tree. It was under trees, thus magnetised, that the most astonishing effects were witnessed at Busancy, at Beaubourg, at Bayonne, &c. Unfortunately this method, which is too apparent, can scarcely be employed until the belief in the efficacy of Magnetism shall become general; and that time is perhaps yet far distant. It may be further remarked that magnetised trees can be used only in fine weather, and during the more favourable season of the year, while it is also necessary to observe some of the precautions which I have mentioned in speaking of the chain⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Music was employed by Mesmer, to throw his patients into a tranquil state; to inspire them with agreeable sensations, and thus dispose them the better for receiving the magnetical action.

It contributed likewise to produce a uniformity of movement throughout the assembly, and to sustain the attention. I know not how far it may operate as a conductor of Magnetism; but there is no doubt that the magnetiser's voice, or the sound of a wind instrument played by himself, produces some effect. Those means however, of producing magnetical effects, operate upon the nerves; and according to my own system of conduct, whatever tends to excite any nervous irritation, however gentle it may be, should be employed with every imaginable caution ⁽⁶⁸⁾.

It will be understood, from what I have just said, that the assistance of the chain, of the *baquet* and of magnetised trees, may sometimes be resorted to; but only when there are many patients to be treated at the same time, and when there is besides a favourable concurrence of circumstances.

Something must also be said respecting the iron and glass rods, which were used in Mesmer's school. These rods were about a foot in length, perfectly polished and rounded at both ends; they were about half an inch in diameter, at that extremity which was held in the hand, and they terminated in a blunt point at the other extremity, which was about one quarter of the first dimension. They may serve to direct the fluid, the rays of which they collect; but are not necessary, as the fingers united into a point produce nearly the same effect. The Marquis de Puységur never employs them; and they have this inconvenience, that they present to the eyes of the person magnetised a singularity in the process, which should always be avoided. I made use of them at first, but afterwards gavethem up. It appears, from several experiments, that a magnetised bottle, held so as to present the neck of it to the patient, equally invigorates the magnetical action ⁽⁶⁹⁾.

There are also various other means of applying Magnetism, which produce considerable effects, and the utility of which is acknowledged by all magnetisers, without exception; they

should not be neglected ; and I shall proceed to describe them, although I cannot exactly explain in what manner they convey magnetical action.

I have already observed that the magnetiser can accumulate fluid in the different substances which he touches, and it is certain that various bodies are capable of being impregnated with it in greater or less proportions. That which possesses this property in the most superior degree is *water* ; and magnetised water should always be given to patients who are undergoing a course of magnetical treatment. This water produces the most surprising effects. I have seen, in more than twenty successive instances, a person purged seven or eight times in one day, without any cholic, and merely from having drank a bottle of magnetised water ; and I have ascertained, from comparative experiments, that it was the magnetised water which produced that effect. It is to be understood, that it caused the purgation in consequence of facilitating some necessary crisis to which nature was already predisposed : the same water would have had a precisely contrary effect, by fortifying the stomach and bracing the intestines, if the patient had been relaxed. It must not be inferred from this, that the water can at pleasure be rendered tonical or refreshing, astringent or laxative ; if magnetisers were to promulgate such absurdities, they would deservedly be laughed at. Magnetised water has these peculiar advantages, that it can never do any injury, that it passes freely, and that patients always drink it with pleasure. In general, this water acts only upon patients who have already been for some days under magnetical influence, and who are already impregnated with the fluid ; they often find in it a peculiar flavour, which is agreeable to them. I have observed this water to act, in a very perceptible manner, upon individuals who had been only once at the *chain* ; others have also noticed a similar effect, but such cases are rare.

The magnetical fluid frequently communicates, to alimentary substances and to medical remedies, properties which they did

not before possess. Thus, there are many examples of persons who could not digest milk, but with whom it agreed perfectly well when it was magnetised.

I shall now say a few words respecting the manner of magnetising water; because I have been much embarrassed upon that subject, before I received instructions from my somnambulists.

In order to magnetise a bottle of water, it is sufficient to hold it in one hand, and to pass the other over it from top to bottom, turning it round always in the same direction, for two or three minutes. The bottle may also be placed upon the knee; and, resting your head on the upper part, magnetise it with both hands: when this is done, raise the bottle by the neck, with one hand, and with the other unite the fluid towards the basis. To magnetise a glass of water, it will be sufficient to hold it in one hand, and to place the other over the surface of the glass, approaching your fingers together, about a dozen times, towards the centre, as if to introduce the fluid: your breath directed upon it, twice or thrice, will complete the charge; but this last part of the process is hardly necessary⁽⁷⁰⁾. In order that the fluid may penetrate the water, it should always be impelled with the united powers of volition and attention. Water cannot receive more than a certain quantity of the fluid; that is, until it is saturated: I ascertained this fact in the following manner. A somnambulist seeing me magnetise a bottle of water, said to me, at the expiration of two or three minutes, "*What are you doing there?—the bottle will not receive any more*⁽⁷¹⁾". The water appeared luminous to him, while in the state of somnambulism; and when awake, he found that it possessed a particular and agreeable flavour.

The following is more singular, but not the less certain. Other substances can be so impregnated with the fluid, as to reproduce the effects which the magnetiser's hand would cause. The substance which possesses this property in the greatest degree is, in my opinion, *glass*. I have seen persons, under my

magnetical influence, who experienced violent paroxysms of pain, and whom I relieved in an instant, by applying to the part affected a piece of thick glass, which I had well magnetised and enveloped in a small piece of linen. This observation I have made often enough to have no doubt upon the subject⁽⁷²⁾.

Of all the experiments of this description, the following is one the result of which astonished me the most. A patient of mine had such a coldness in her feet, all night, that it prevented her from sleeping: I conceived the idea of giving her a bottle of magnetised water, to place against her feet while in bed; and at the expiration of about an hour, it produced a considerable degree of heat, with a very copious perspiration in the feet. This process has succeeded several times; but it must not however be concluded that it will succeed in every case. I have tried it upon other patients, and the bottle only augmented the cold, as it would naturally have done if it had not been magnetised⁽⁷³⁾.

I must say a few words concerning the means I employ for magnetising pieces of glass, or various other substances. I surround them with both hands, between the thumb and the fore-finger; I then draw these together, and when they are united I bring them towards the centre; repeating that *pass* from ten to thirty times, according to the bulk of the body that is to be magnetised. This process is not perhaps better than any other, but it is derived from the theory of magnetical poles, and was used in the school of Mesmer: I adopted it when I was first instructed in the practice, and have never employed any other method, having always found it successful⁽⁷⁴⁾.

The reservoir (or *baquet*), already described, is to be magnetised in the same manner; charging it completely with fluid, and then establishing a current, by a repetition of movements always made in one direction.

A tree is magnetised by first touching it, and then retiring a few paces off; directing the fluid upon it, from the branches to the trunk, and from thence to the roots. In fact, in whatever

manner the fluid is directed upon any substance, the result is sure to be the impregnating that substance with it⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Fine, clear and open weather, is more favourable to Magnetism than cold and cloudy. Magnetism has greater energy when the sun is above the horizon; it is also more powerful in summer, than in winter. The magnetiser renews his fluid, and purifies it, by walking in the open air and in the sun. I do not, however, believe that there is any specific method, by which we can accumulate the fluid in our person at pleasure; at least I have never been informed of such a method, nor have I ever noticed the want of it.

I have already observed, that tempestuous weather, and an atmosphere charged with electricity, are unfavourable to Magnetism: we should therefore avoid magnetising under such circumstances. All persons whom I have happened to cast into magnetical sleep, without observing this caution, have complained, when they awoke, of having a sulphureous taste in their mouths.

I have mentioned already the assertion of several somnambulists, that when we magnetise persons in certain diseased states, we are subject to become impregnated with a morbid fluid; and of their advising us to get rid of it. The mode of doing this, consists in obtaining another magnetiser to pass his hands a dozen times over our arms; shaking his fingers after each pass. I doubt much whether this latter process is very necessary; but as the precaution occasions no trouble, it may as well be adopted. When I magnetise, I am always in the habit of thus shaking my fingers, and of passing my hands over each other, from time to time, as if to disengage the morbid fluid with which I might be impregnated; but I am not certain whether it is of any use.

I need hardly mention that, in order to magnetise successfully, we should place ourselves in as convenient a posture as possible, and equally avoid the excesses both of heat and of

cold. When we are too cold, we act with difficulty ; and when too warm, we soon fatigue ourselves.

It is abundantly proved, by experiments, that the magnetical fluid is variously modified according to the substances which it traverses. It is maintained, that there are some which oppose an obstacle to its passage, and that *silk* is of that description ; yet I am sure that silk clothes do not absolutely impede the action of Magnetism, and that in such cases the silk would not separate itself from Magnetism as it does from electricity. If it be true, however, that it may weaken its effects, it should be avoided ; and it would therefore be requisite, that magnetisers should recommend to their patients not to wear silk dresses at the time of being magnetised.

There are some precautions to be taken when one magnetiser is intended to supply the place of another. First, he should himself be magnetised, in order to establish an affinity between you and him ; and next, it should be previously ascertained whether he does the patient any good ; for it often happens that an individual, accustomed to the fluid of one person, is inconvenienced by receiving the fluid of another, which has no analogy with the former. There are some magnetisers who can be substituted to each other, and some who cannot. When we supply the place of another, only temporarily, we should act according to his method and principles, and consider ourselves merely as the instrument of his will.

CHAPTER V.

Of the difference of power between magnetisers.

WHOEVER has had habitual intercourse with any considerable number of magnetisers, cannot doubt of there being some who are gifted with constitutional powers to that effect, in a very superior degree to other men. I do not know whether there be any who are absolutely deprived of the faculty of magnetising; but very few will be found equally qualified as *Mesmer*, the *Marquis de Puységur*, and *Father Hervier*. Mesmer affirms that he has met with persons, though indeed very rarely, who not only were unable to magnetise, but whose very presence was destructive of magnetical effects. I do not comprehend what is meant by such a negative qualification, nor do I believe that his observation is correct; at least I can assert that no one of my acquaintance ever met with any individual of this description. I am the more surprised that Mesmer should have advanced such an opinion, because he might have anticipated that it would be considered as an excuse, carefully provided, in case of his experiments not succeeding. It is not the less true, however, that there are prodigious differences between magnetisers, as to the power which they are capable of exerting; that some have frequently produced the state of somnambulism, while others have made numerous efforts for that purpose, without obtaining such a result; that somnambulists, to whom different magnetisers were presented, have discovered various degrees of power in them; and that there were some even by whom they would not suffer themselves to be touched, from an apprehension that their action would be too violent⁽⁷⁶⁾.

The theory of Magnetism must be more complete than it is at present, before we can account, in a satisfactory manner, for the difference of power which certainly exists between magnetisers.

I can only offer conjectures upon the subject ; but they are the result of my own experience and reflection, and they seem to connect themselves with those principles which I have laid down, in describing the means by which magnetical action is produced. The cause of this difference I believe to arise from the following circumstances :

First.—The energy of volition.

Second.—The capacity of attention.

Third.—The direction of the will.

Fourth.—The firmness of belief.

Fifth.—The confidence in our own power, which is the result of that belief.

Sixth.—The benevolent disposition by which the magnetiser is animated, and the intention by which he is guided.

Seventh.—The physical constitution of the magnetiser, and actual state of his health.

Let us recapitulate these circumstances, accompanied with a few observations.

First.—In order to constitute energy of volition, it is not sufficient merely to say to one's-self, *I will*. Volition must emanate spontaneously from the soul ; it must spring from an earnest desire of accomplishing the proposed object, and should be unobstructed by any impediment.

Second.—The attention must be free from all effort and constraint ; nothing should be suffered to disturb it, and its exercise should be such as to cause no fatigue to the mind.

Third.—The direction of the will should be constant, uniform, tranquil, and perfectly free from hesitation, or uncertainty as to the purpose intended ;—we should be anxious, not to produce curious phenomena, but merely salutary effects, by seconding the efforts of nature.

Fourth.—A firm belief gives us power to overcome obstacles ; while, at the same time, it sustains the energy of volition and precludes anxiety.

Fifth.—Confidence in the application of our power is a neces-

sary result of such a belief; there can be no doubt that it tends to augment our power, or at least the means of exerting it, and that it imparts an additional energy to volition.

Sixth.—With regard to intention, the magnetiser will never produce salutary effects, but in proportion as he is animated by a sentiment of benevolence, by a tender concern for the patient, and by a sincere and disinterested desire of relieving him; it is from this disposition that must result that calm, peaceful and uniform action, which makes itself gradually felt, and which assuages pain. This phenomenon is doubtless difficult to be explained, but it is acknowledged by every one who has practised Magnetism: I imagine that the influence of such a benevolent intention causes the fluid to emanate without any effort, and to follow at once its proper direction. It is certain that very little good is produced, when our intention is merely to gratify curiosity, and our object to exhibit extraordinary effects. Generally speaking, those persons who possess a tranquil mind, accessible to affectionate emotions, are much better magnetisers than they whose imaginations are strong, but immoderately active.

Seventh.—With respect to physical constitution, it is indisputable that a man of weak temperament cannot magnetise with the same energy as a man of robust frame, who exercises all his faculties with freedom and ease, exempt from bodily fatigue. Magnetism consists in a communication of vital powers; and these powers are more feeble in a valetudinarian, or in an old man, than in one who is healthy and vigorous.

There are, among different men, variations which result both from physical and moral causes, and which have a prodigious influence upon their magnetical powers. The temper of some is resolute, settled, and active; while that of others is destitute of firmness, hesitating and indolent. The sensibility of some is easily moved; others, on the contrary, are scarcely accessible to emotion from any cause. Some are endowed with extreme vivacity, while others are uniformly cold and tranquil. Lastly, there

are some who infuse great energy into their faculty of volition, and others in whom this is reduced to a faint desire.

The most able magnetiser is him who, to a robust constitution, unites a character at once firm but sedate; who possesses the elements of ardent passions, without being subdued by them; whose will is powerful, but divested of enthusiasm; who combines activity with patience, has the faculty of concentrating his attention without painful effort, and who when magnetising is solely occupied with what he is about. Such men are not indeed very common, and hence the reason why it is so difficult to meet with good magnetisers. It must not however be concluded, that a man who does not possess all the qualifications I have enumerated is wholly unable to magnetise successfully: although the effects he produces may be less remarkable, he will always accomplish enough to answer the purposes of personal conviction and of producing real good, for which it will be sufficient that he duly exercises his volition.

In reading the history of the first magnetical treatments, we find cures related which appear almost miraculous, from the promptitude and intensity of the effects produced, and which, in fact, are rejected as fabulous by many people; I can venture, however, to affirm, that the greater part of those cures have actually taken place, as we find them related. Similar effects are reproduced at the present time, but more rarely; and I will state the reason, notwithstanding I am sufficiently aware that it will be admitted only by those who are already persuaded of their reality.

When the first magnetical experiments were made, the phenomena, so new and so unexpected, which resulted from them, produced an excessive degree of enthusiasm. This enthusiasm, otherwise dangerous, excited an unbounded confidence, together with an exalted faith; and magnetisers were thus enabled to exert all their faculties, and to display their powers in the fullest extent, without any great effort being required on their part. The patients, likewise co-operated, by surrendering them-

selves to the care of the magnetisers with an implicit confidence and unreserved submission ; and the latter succeeded, because they firmly believed, because they willed with energy, and because nothing appeared difficult to them. At the present day, such faith and such confidence are seldom to be met with ; the greater part of those who magnetise feel a sort of apprehension, lest they should not succeed ; and I have myself experienced this anxiety a hundred times. I am thoroughly convinced of the reality of the agent which I employ ; yet am sometimes disposed to question my own power, and this doubt enervates my action. There are some days, on which I produce greater effects than on others, and such increase of power is always the consequence of my faculties being exerted with greater ease and confidence on those occasions : I perceive also that my power is augmented, whenever I have produced a salutary effect. The diminution of confidence does not wholly take away the power of doing good, it only prevents as much being produced as otherwise would be ; and it is of importance to state this circumstance, in order that we may not be surprised when we fail, at first, to produce effects similar to those which we find related in books, however well authenticated they may be. Hence, when I suggest experiments, I carefully abstain from promising that very marvellous effects will result from them ; I merely affirm, that he who strictly fulfils the necessary conditions, will obtain results sufficient to convince himself of the reality of magnetical action. It is only by degrees that he can subsequently become acquainted with the full extent of his power.

It has been asked, whether the power of magnetisers augments in proportion as they exercise it : this I know not. It is certain, however, that a long practice in Magnetism inspires greater confidence, gives greater facility in employing the processes, and a greater discernment in the selection of them ; consequently, though the power may not be actually increased, at least the means of applying that which we naturally possess are

multiplied; and supposing an equality in all other respects, the experienced magnetiser possesses an advantage over the inexperienced one.

Independently of the various degrees of magnetical power with which we are gifted, and which result from a combination of those causes I have enumerated, there are also differences of power which arise from relative circumstances. All somnambulists agree in acknowledging that different qualities exist in the fluid of different persons, and a greater or less analogy between the several fluids; they all inform us that the action of each magnetiser is more powerful upon certain patients, than upon others; and that there are some even who, from the peculiar qualities of their fluid, are better adapted for curing particular diseases, in preference to those of other descriptions⁽⁷⁷⁾. It is at least an incontestible fact, that there exists between certain persons a primary and natural affinity, which renders the magnetical action easier, and more prompt in the manifestation of its effects. Personal experience can alone throw an adequate light upon this subject; and it is sufficient to know, that all well-disposed persons, of both sexes, have in their power to produce, by Magnetism, results more or less efficacious. If any one should find his action too powerful, in particular cases, he also will find that it is always easy to be moderated.

The difference of sex has no direct nor relative influence upon the magnetical faculty. Women can magnetise equally well, as men, and they can also produce somnambulists equally good: their action in general is milder, but not the less salutary. When impelled by an adequate degree of confidence in their own power, they will be sure to magnetise their own children more successfully than it could be done by the most experienced magnetiser; and they ought to be preferred, as far as possible, for magnetising patients of their own sex.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the influence which the confidence of patients is likely to have upon the efficacy of their magnetical treatment.

It is an opinion extensively diffused among those who have heard Magnetism mentioned, and who have not reflected upon its theory, that, in order to experience its effects, it is necessary to have *faith*; but this opinion is wholly without foundation.

Faith is necessary to the magnetiser, because if he did not possess it he would act without energy; yet it is not necessary to the person magnetised, and if the latter experienced effects, only in proportion as he were previously persuaded that he would experience them, those effects might then justly be attributed to the influence of his imagination.

At the same time, however, where there exists an absolute incredulity in the patient, it may repel the action of the magnetiser,—thwart and retard it, and consequently oppose, for a greater or less time, the effects which such action is to produce. This indeed is one of the reasons why we can act with greater certainty upon simple people, residing in the country, than upon those who mingle much in society, and who submit to the operation merely as an experiment. Hence also, it is a matter of prudence not to propose the trial of Magnetism, except to persons whose sufferings may be sufficiently great to induce them to yield, (though very doubtful of its efficacy) with the earnest hope of finding that the proposed means of cure are not chimerical.

I have found, among men who were resolutely sceptical and whom I attempted to magnetise, several upon whom I could produce no effect whatever. Perhaps this may have arisen from my own apprehensions of not succeeding, which disturbed my

confidence, distracted my attention, and impeded the natural and spontaneous exercise of my volition; but it is not absolutely impossible, on the other hand, that the moral disposition of the patient may have partly repelled my action.

From numerous observations which I have made upon this subject, I am persuaded that confidence is a favourable disposition in the person who is to be magnetised; but that, in order to experience all the effects of which he may be susceptible, it will be sufficient that he remains entirely passive, without endeavouring to ascertain whether he does or does not feel any thing. He should surrender himself to the magnetiser's will, as if he were unconcerned, and not attempt to oppose it by any operation of his own mind; he should neither speak to him of things which might divert his attention, nor, if possible, permit himself even to think. Supposing the person magnetised were incredulous, yet if he do not endeavour to baffle the magnetiser's purpose during the operation, and if he abstain from exciting any apprehensions in the mind of the latter, the action will begin to take effect after a certain period; then, in general, it will produce a situation which I would compare to that state immediately preceding sleep, when our ideas are vague and undefined, and when, without weariness or actual thought, we remain insensible to the succession of time.

I have commonly observed that, when the magnetical influence has commenced to be established, the patient experiences no listlessness, and he may be magnetised during a full hour without feeling impatient: now this will happen to individuals who would otherwise find it very irksome to remain motionless in a chair, during a similar space of time, without being magnetised. This effect is remarkably striking in children.

When you magnetise a person who is dejected by extreme suffering, his incredulity will oppose no obstacle to the magnetical action; because he then feels no anxiety to prove the nullity of your action, but is desirous rather to be convinced of the possibility of your procuring him relief. However, I have mag-

netised several incredulous persons, who, notwithstanding, have quickly felt the effects ; from all which I conclude, that, in order to experience them, belief is not essentially necessary, though it may facilitate those effects and contribute to their efficacy, in the same way as confidence in medical remedies (according to the confession of the faculty themselves) promotes their beneficial operation (78).

CHAPTER VII.

Of the application of Magnetism to the cure of diseases.

THE greater part of the works which have been published upon the subject of Magnetism, give a very exaggerated idea of its action and efficacy. It is not that the accounts contained in them are false ; but that a selection has been exclusively made of extraordinary cures and of the most singular phenomena. It might be imagined, in reading them, that the greater number of persons magnetised are to become somnambulists ; while, in point of fact, the real state of somnambulism is rare. It might also be supposed that Magnetism cured every disorder, except in cases where it is the consequence of some material injury sustained in any vital organ, such as the heart or the lungs ; but this is likewise erroneous. Those surprising relations, which were too hastily imparted to the public, should have been previously investigated by medical men, initiated in the practice of Magnetism ; and then have been communicated to magnetisers only, who, already convinced of the existence of the agent which they employ, are desirous of knowing the full extent to which it can operate. Such accounts are more likely to weaken than to fortify the belief of those who seek for instruction upon the subject ; first, because whatever is marvellous is sure to inspire distrust in a reflecting

mind ; and secondly, because the greater part of those who make attempts at magnetising,—not obtaining phenomena similar to those which have been described, will conclude that they are incapable of producing them, and even suspect that they who really have observed those phenomena were the dupes of some illusion.

Among the number of patients who submit to magnetical treatment, there are many who find themselves gradually relieved, or cured, without having experienced any thing which demonstrated to them a positive action. About one twentieth part of the persons magnetised become somnambulists ; but of these, there is scarcely one in five who attains to that degree of perspicacity, of which so many instances are described in the works of the Marquis de Puységur and his brothers, in those of M. Tardy, and in the memoirs of the Strasburgh society.

In the number of three hundred persons, or more, whom I have magnetised or in whose treatment I have co-operated, I have scarcely met with more than a dozen somnambulists who exhibited phenomena of a very curious description. It is true that I have noticed a far greater number than this, but it was casually ; they were under the operation of magnetisers with whom I was little acquainted ; and I must confess that these cases would have excited my astonishment, rather than established my conviction, had I not observed similar facts in somnambulists under my own direction.

The doctrine of Magnetism has been much injured, by its being announced as an efficacious remedy for all kinds of disorders: these unwarrantable pretensions are equally refuted by reason and by observation. Sometimes, the magnetical action produces no effect ; and at other times, it produces apparent effects, but without the patient's obtaining any favourable result from them. It often procures only temporary relief ; it often, also, determines crises which may agitate, but of which the utility is not perceptible ; or it will accomplish a radical cure, but only after a long treatment, which has demanded the magnetiser's constant perseverance. I know that very rapid, and even in-

stantaneous cures, are sometimes performed ; but these are susceptible of taking place, only when an additional impulse is all that nature requires, to determine some crisis to which it was predisposed.

We shall not discuss in this chapter what is relative to the state of somnambulism, as that will require a separate and distinct investigation ; we shall therefore confine ourselves, on the present occasion, to a rapid survey of the effects most commonly produced by Magnetism ;—considering them physically, in the first instance, as proving the reality of a positive action, and then as constituting the means of curing diseases ; and finally, we shall examine what precautions are necessary in the treatment of disorders by Magnetism.

As I shall speak only according to the results which my own experiments have produced, it is possible that, upon several points, I may not agree with other magnetisers, perhaps more fortunate or more skilful than myself. But there will not arise any contradiction between us ; only, I shall have promised less than they, and I may be judged more timorous. It will, however, be a benefit to those who may find themselves induced to try experiments, should they obtain greater success than I have ventured to predict⁽⁷⁹⁾.

When we magnetise a patient afflicted with some chronical disease, which is not the result of any defective organization, nor of any material injury sustained in some vital organ, the following is what frequently happens.

During the first quarter of an hour, the patient receives no impression whatever,—if the hand be guided before his face, at the distance of about two inches, he does not experience any kind of sensation ; but about the expiration of that time, or usually within half an hour, the magnetiser's hand produces in the patient a sensation either of heat or cold,—most commonly the former, resembling that which would be excited if a heated iron were passed before his face. When he is magnetised a second time, this sensation, which at first required half an hour to be produced, will arise within a much shorter period,

and it will take place the sooner, and have greater intensity, according as the previous affinity has been more perfectly established.

When the hand is passed along the arms or legs, the impression of heat or of cold is not felt immediately under the hand, but precedes it.

It frequently happens that the patient experiences a drowsiness ; his eyes and head feel heavy, but still without his being in any manner uneasy. Very often also, if the hand has been conducted only as far down as the legs, without extending to the extremity of the feet, the legs will become torpid. When, after having magnetised an hour, the hand is brought down the legs to the extremities of the feet, the drowsiness ceases, the head becomes relieved, and the numbness of the legs is dispelled.

The application of the hand, upon the chest, creates in that part a sensation of weight, and sometimes of heat ; and these effects also terminate when the magnetical action is diffused over the whole body.

The pulse undergoes a remarkable alteration when a person is magnetised ; it rises, becomes quicker and more regular : this is an effect which seldom fails to be manifested.

If there be any pains occasioned by an obstructed perspiration, it very commonly happens that a perceptible perspiration takes place in the feet or the hands, during the operation.

The patient usually feels himself in a state of repose, and is unconscious of the lapse of time, while being magnetised. It often happens that he falls into an easy slumber, which the slightest noise may interrupt. It not unfrequently occurs, likewise, that he finds a difficulty in opening his eyes ; and this symptom disappears as soon as the magnetiser passes his fingers across the eyelids.

In order to ascertain the reality of these various effects, it should not be enquired of the patient whether he experiences them, because such a question might suggest the answer ; it is better to wait for the spontaneous description of his sensations.

The agitation sometimes produced by an excessive irritation

of the nerves, or even by fever, is capable of impeding the magnetical action, and particularly the sleeping state; it will be proper therefore to select, for operating upon the patient, those moments when he is most calm and settled.

Such effects as I have just described are certainly sufficient to convince the person who produces them, that there does exist a positive action; yet they are only of a trifling nature, compared with those more important effects which frequently occur.

Sometimes a profound sleep suddenly takes place, which lasts an hour or longer, and is renewed at each sitting, until the patient is entirely cured; sometimes a powerful heat is produced, or a violent oppression; at others, Magnetism acts upon the nerves and causes spasms which it is necessary to appease, or it may, on the contrary, produce a state of remarkable calmness and self-satisfaction. Patients who labour under obstructions, usually feel a strong heat in the obstructed organ, or some pain which they had not before experienced. In certain cases, by holding the hand over the head, we occasion there a pain, which immediately subsides, when the hand is passed along the legs⁽⁸⁰⁾.

It often happens that Magnetism revives some former pain, which had not been felt perhaps for several years previously: when this is the case, it is always a proof that the original cause of the disease has not been entirely removed.

When females are magnetised, they almost always experience, at first, an acceleration of periodical circumstances; and although that acceleration might be attributed merely to chance, yet the same effect is so frequently produced, that we can hardly hesitate to ascribe it to Magnetism.

We are sure of witnessing several of these phenomena during the first week, when our experiments are made in the country, and they are substantial proofs of the reality of magnetical action: we have now to consider whether sufficient proofs exist that this action is able to cure human diseases.

The only proof, indeed, that Magnetism is the means of cur-

ing a great variety of those diseases, must result from a comparison of the observations which have been made. But, whoever reads the numerous relations published upon that subject, being once convinced of the existence of such an agent, can no longer doubt its efficacy; and I think it is more necessary to warn all new magnetisers against enthusiasm, than to strive any further to convince them that Magnetism has the power of curing.

I shall therefore now endeavour to trace the limits within which, according to my judgment, we should confine ourselves; and give my opinion concerning the application of Magnetism as a method of cure, and also respecting the degree of confidence which it is entitled to claim. I shall omit to speak of those treatments in which the crisis of Somnambulism is obtained, because that subject will be reverted to hereafter.

There are many acute diseases for the cure of which I should have great confidence in Magnetism, and for which I should myself have recourse to it, before employing any of the ordinary medical remedies; for instance, most of the inflammatory complaints, such as peripneumony, or inflammation of the lungs,—quinsy, &c.* These are generally treated by copious bleedings; and I am convinced that, if Magnetism were employed in the earlier period of the disorder, it would render that operation quite unnecessary. Not that I advise any one, in that case, to decline the assistance of the faculty; I only propose that Magnetism should be tried previously to any other remedy. If after a treatment of two hours only, we find all the alarming symptoms disappear, we may continue to adhere to Magnetism, renewing its application at the expiration of four, five, or six hours; and the physician would then be able to judge whether bleeding was still necessary, or at least, whether there would be any danger in continuing to defer it.

* I have cured quinsies, but I never treated pulmonary inflammations; hence, it is only from conjecture that I conclude Magnetism would be beneficial in such disorders⁽⁸¹⁾.

It may be objected, perhaps, that I have considered Magnetism as a tonical remedy, and that tonics are improper to be administered in inflammatory cases. To this I reply, that in the diseases I have specified, the inflammation is not general but local only, and that the effect of Magnetism is to restore the equilibrium. A man has a quinsy: they bleed him in order to reduce the inflammation, and not because he has too much blood; for he had the same quantity on the preceding day, when he perceived no cause of complaint. Magnetism, by recalling the blood to the extremities, and by preventing its too powerful determination towards the affected part, will allay the inflammation and most likely supersede the necessity of bleeding.

I would not, however, place the same reliance upon Magnetism, as a remedy in bilious or putrid fevers. It may be, notwithstanding, employed as an auxiliary, likely to determine a favourable crisis; but it would not dispense with the use of evacuating medicines⁽⁸²⁾.

In adynamic fever, where there is a prostration of vital powers, and in ataxic fever where their distribution is irregular, I would also employ Magnetism as an auxiliary; in the former case because it invigorates, in consequence of its tonical properties; and in the latter, because it tends to restore the equilibrium.

I have seen prodigious effects of Magnetism manifested in cases of the gout ascending into the head, the lungs, or the stomach. I have myself employed it on four different occasions, where the patient was suffering excruciating pains; and succeeded, each time, in recalling the gout to the extremities, within an hour. It is true that I had magnetised the same patient on a former occasion, and for another complaint; that I had even cast him into the state of Somnambulism, and that consequently I was qualified for exerting a powerful action upon him.

I shall say nothing more concerning the treatment of acute

diseases : to discuss such topics with propriety, and even to be able duly to appreciate the magnetical cures of this kind which are related in different publications, would require a thorough knowledge of medical matters. When a patient was in a dangerous state, I have never treated him by Magnetism without the physician's consent; and in truth, it is the faculty who ought always to exercise the discretion of advising it, if they would but take the necessary trouble to investigate its effects⁽⁸³⁾.

Let us now consider the use of Magnetism in chronical disorders.

There are a great number of this description which elude the power of physic; there are others which cannot be defined; and there are many which, though perfectly known, cannot be cured by any medical application. Among the latter may be reckoned those which, after protracted sufferings, terminate in death; and those which, without occasioning death, render the life of the patient painful and languishing. It is principally in the latter cases that Magnetism is attended with the most signal success; not that it radically cures those disorders within a short time, nor always ultimately, but at least it procures material relief.

In those chronical diseases which the faculty cannot distinctly ascertain, Magnetism acts by producing particular crises, which should not alarm us, because they are always followed by a remarkable amelioration in the patient's condition.

In diseases which are well known, but of which the cure is either impossible, or at least extremely difficult when they have attained a certain period, I have seen very surprising effects result from the application of Magnetism. I will cite the case of constitutional dropsy⁽⁸⁴⁾ as an example. I have cured three different ones;—cured them radically, without any other remedy; and the patients, when I undertook them, had been pronounced incurable, by very skilful physicians who had exhausted all the resources of their art. I do not mean to infer, from this circumstance, that every species of dropsy is curable by Mag-

netism ; I only affirm my having cured that disorder in three instances, two of which, being of long standing, required a very protracted treatment, and the third, being more recent, was cured within the space of one month. Dropsy is often the result of some organical disorder, as M. Corvisart has proved in his *Treatise on the disorders of the Heart* ; in such cases, I do not believe that Magnetism can cure it, any more than other remedies.

Intermittent fevers generally yield to the magnetical action after a few sittings. On the days when the fever returns, the magnetiser should commence his operation as the approach of the fit begins to be felt ; and he ought to renew it, on the intermitting days, at the same hour as on the preceding ones. The first effect is to stop the chill fits, after which the fever diminishes by degrees, until it finally disappears. It will be proper, however, to continue the process for several days after the fever has subsided, in order to prevent its return.

I have employed Magnetism, sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully, in disorders of the eyes, tooth-ache, pains in the ears, and in several cases of deafness. These maladies often arise from causes over which the magnetical action can have no influence. It is evidently without any effect upon a cataract, a carious tooth, any serious damage sustained in the organ of hearing, &c. ; when the cause of any disorder in those different parts is unknown, the attempt at magnetising is proper to be made. In cases of inflammation in the eyes, I think local Magnetism had better be avoided, for fear of increasing the irritation ; but Magnetism *in full stream* ought, on the contrary, to procure relief.

I have seen a catarrh, which was attended with the most alarming symptoms, cured at one sitting only ; and that cure was accomplished by a remarkable crisis, though a very frequent one in magnetical treatments. The magnetiser had drawn from the lungs to the legs, in consequence of which the former became entirely disengaged ; but the patient experienced, during three

days, insupportable pains in the thighs and legs. Those pains would most probably have been removed on the following day, if the patient had not been apprehensive of submitting to a repetition of the process which had produced them ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

In disorders peculiar to the female sex, occasioned by the suppression of a cause preservative of their health, Magnetism is generally attended with the most determinate and salutary effects. The intention, then, is more or less rapidly and completely fulfilled, according as the complaint is of long standing or otherwise, and according as the restoration of health depends upon the removal of some obstacle, the production of any necessary evacuation, or as the cause of such complaint may proceed from a general perturbation of the system. The same may be said of the greater part of those maladies which arise from an overflowing of the milk.

Abdominal obstructions constitute a class of diseases in which, perhaps, Magnetism has the greatest efficacy; but the treatment is often tedious and accompanied by unexpected circumstances. It is well known that, at the outset, Mesmer attributed to obstructions the greatest part of the complaints incident to human nature: that doctrine, however, was very properly rejected, although he certainly did not extend its application so far as has been insinuated by his enemies.

Abdominal tumours, produced by an alteration in the texture of the organ, are not always mortal, but they are always incurable. Magnetism can produce no good in such cases; and I think its application would then be dangerous, as, by exciting movement and sensibility in an organ which should be kept perfectly inert, a crisis might be brought on which would prove fatal in its consequences. When, therefore, a patient is afflicted with any such obstruction of long standing, it will be proper to consult some medical man, in order to ascertain its description, before having recourse to Magnetism. Provided, however, that we avoid to direct the action upon the tumour itself, we may try for some days the Magnetism *in full stream*,

for the purpose of ascertaining whether the patient be disposed to fall into the state of *Somnambulism*.

In Rheumatisms, Sciaticas, and other *neuralgiæ*, the cure is generally to be obtained by Magnetism; but patience is required, in proportion as the disease is of long standing. When the pain is fixed in any particular part, the first effect of Magnetism is commonly to dislodge it; then it descends along the limbs, and finds an issue at their extremities: this effect has been remarked by persons who formerly magnetised, without being conscious of the agent which they employed.

In whitlows and other accidents of that description, which without being dangerous keep the patient in a state of prolonged suffering, Magnetism entirely stops the progress of the disease*. I have employed it twenty times and always successfully: I pass my hand along the arm, and bring it down to the extremity of the finger, in order, as it were, to draw out the offending humour. Sometimes the pain transiently increases; but it is soon allayed, and the disorder makes no further progress.

In tumours which require to be suppurated, Magnetism greatly accelerates that crisis; and if the tumour be only commencing, it will sometimes disperse it, by separating the humours and giving them a different direction.

In cases of Furuncles, and perhaps also of Carbuncles or *Anthrax*, I imagine that the application of Magnetism will speedily cure, provided the complaint be not in a too advanced stage; and I shall relate an observation I have had occasion to make, relatively to such cases. I had at my country house two farmers, who were brothers and aged about twenty or twenty-five years,—both of very robust constitutions. During harvest time, one of them had a furuncle under the

* I allude to what is called the mild whitlow, viz. a swelling between the *cuticle* and *cutis*; and not to that which is situated within the sheath of the tendons, or between the *periosteum* and the bone, called *malignant whitlows*,—as incision becomes necessary in all such cases.

cheek, in consequence of which he was seriously indisposed. Before the cure took place, his brother was seized with a pimple in the same part, which was swollen, inflamed, and very painful: he wished to go that evening to a neighbouring town, in order to obtain medical advice; but I prevailed upon him to wait until the following day,—made him sit down, and in the course of a few minutes cast him into magnetical sleep. At the expiration of an hour and a half, he awoke and was much surprised to find that the pain, the swelling, and the inflammation, had disappeared. Some days after, several pimples broke out in different parts of his body, but which did not prevent him from prosecuting his usual labours. I presume that eruption to have been produced by the humour which I had dispersed from his cheek; and that it would not have occurred if I had continued to magnetise him several days successively, so as to excite a perspiration or any other favourable crisis. Although the inflammation round the furuncle had entirely subsided, the pimple still remained; but afterwards it turned black, and at the expiration of five or six days separated from the cheek, in the shape of a nail, about half an inch in length.

In violent and periodical Megrims, I have seen them wholly removed by Magnetism in the course of an hour; but where the disease is of long standing, and if the attacks have been renewed for several years from time to time, it will be necessary to act with great caution. It often happens that, in curing the megrim, pains are brought on over the whole body, or some acute disease is produced; because the affecting cause, which was regularly determined to the head, is thrown into another direction, and occasions a revolution in the general system. Two examples of this kind have fallen within my particular observation; happily, they were unattended by any fatal consequences, but they taught me an important lesson. In such cases, it is necessary to continue magnetising for a month or two after the apparent cure, in order to destroy the root of the disease. To this subject, however, I shall recur hereafter.

I have never had an opportunity of treating epileptic patients; but numerous experiments prove that Epilepsy has often been radically cured by Magnetism. As this disorder may arise from various causes, we should be too sanguine if we always flattered ourselves with the certainty of success; and the same observation will apply to insanity, as well as to the greater part of convulsive maladies. I recommend to those who may have to treat disorders of this kind, previously to consult the accounts we have of similar treatments already accomplished by others, in order that they may not be alarmed in consequence of the various crises likely to be produced. Such treatments require a great deal of fortitude and self-devotion on the part of the magnetiser.

When Magnetism is employed immediately after a blow, or a fall, which has thrown the person into a state of insensibility, it prevents the evil consequences of concussion and of contusion; it supersedes the necessity of bleeding, and accomplishes a cure with surprising rapidity. I have repeatedly proved its efficacy in these cases, and should never hesitate to commence with it; always reserving to myself, however, the propriety of recurring to other means, should Magnetism prove insufficient⁽⁶⁶⁾.

In disorders of the lungs, or in pulmonary consumptions, Magnetism is no more able to effect a cure than medical remedies, when such disorders have attained their last stages; yet it often affords relief, and appears to produce results extremely beneficial at the commencement of its application⁽⁶⁷⁾. This leads me to give some important advice to magnetisers, especially to those who have not had much experience: by disclosing to them my own errors, they will be warned from committing similar ones.

In cases of incurable disorders, it often happens that the commencement of magnetical action produces a very favourable change. The most alarming symptoms disappear, a propitious crisis is manifested, a gentle sleep restores the patient's strength, &c.; from which the magnetiser flatters himself with having

conquered the disease. He then surrenders himself to the most sanguine hopes ; he hastens to announce a cure to the friends and relations of the patient ; but suddenly the fatal symptoms reappear with all their former intensity,—Magnetism no longer acts with any efficacy,—perhaps even it produces injury, and the patient at length succumbs to the violence of the disorder.

Such events give additional cause of regret to the magnetiser : with that of losing a patient to whom he had become attached, is connected the disappointment of those expectations with which he had flattered himself in the result of his efforts. He feels, indeed, that he cannot be blamed for the consequence, but he reproaches himself with having excited fruitless hopes ; he is considered, not as an empiric, but as a dupe ; and such accidents contribute to destroy confidence in Magnetism, which becomes a great evil with reference to the future. I could adduce numerous examples of this kind, but shall limit myself to two or three, derived from the treatment of chronical and acute diseases.

I have seen a woman reduced to the last extremity by a puerperal fever ; and for whom the faculty had declared that nothing more could be done. I approached her bed, with the consent of her relations, and magnetised her with all the energy in my power ; the patient soon fell into a gentle sleep, which lasted more than an hour, and when she awoke she appeared much better : this was about six o'clock in the evening, and towards midnight she expired. I had done some little good by procuring that one hour of sleep, but ought not to have indulged in any hopes from it. Similar things have occurred to me with other patients, who were also given over by the physicians.

A lady of my acquaintance was in the last stage of a consumption ; the faculty had pronounced her incurable, and did not believe that she could live longer than one month. She was harrassed with a continual cough : I magnetised her, drawing powerfully towards her legs. After the first sitting, she continued four and twenty hours without any cough, and conse-

quently found herself considerably relieved; on the following day, the magnetical action produced the same effect, but it benefited her only during fifteen hours; and at the expiration of a few days, the cough was suspended no longer than during the operation of magnetising, till, at length, Magnetism ceased to act altogether, and the patient died as the faculty had foretold.

I treated a lady who was affected with a dreadful complaint, peculiar to her sex. During the first month of her treatment, the effects of Magnetism appeared to be miraculous; I instantaneously allayed the most violent pains, and imparted extraordinary strength to her; but, at the end of two months, these effects diminished, the disease increased, the patient became fearful of the magnetical action,—which irritated her nerves, and she died after enduring the most intense agony. Greatly as I lamented the loss of a person whom I highly respected, and who honoured me with her friendship, my sorrow was deeply aggravated by reflecting on the hopes I once entertained of saving her. This lady was attended by the most skilful physicians, who had pronounced her incurable, but consented that the application of Magnetism should be subjoined to the other remedies which they had prescribed.

These examples, to which many others might be added, ought not however to prevent the application of Magnetism in desperate cases. It will always be proper to have recourse to it, if the patient be willing, both for the purpose of procuring him relief, and because we are unacquainted with the full extent of nature's resources; but I would recommend its never being done without the consent of relations, and of the medical attendant⁽⁶⁸⁾. We must not consider a momentary relief, or a favourable crisis, as a sufficient indication that the cure will certainly follow; above all, we should avoid indulging too freely in premature hope, and more especially imparting that hope to others.

I have already made the remark that, in many organical disorders, Magnetism is without effect. There are even some cases

in which it would be prejudicial; such, for example, where it is necessary to reduce the patient's vital powers, instead of invigorating them, and to lower the circulation, instead of accelerating it⁽⁸⁹⁾.

When there exists an excessive and general irritation, arising from the presence of any foreign substance, as in the case of poison, Magnetism is likely to augment both the irritation and the pain, and to occasion convulsion fits, if obstinately persisted in; but we should stop, the moment we perceive that it increases the disorder, instead of allaying it.

There are instances also where its tonical action may be attended with inconveniences, even upon a patient much debilitated; and I shall cite an example of this. One of my friends, a naturalist whose death was an irreparable loss, finding himself unable to obtain relief from any of the remedies he employed, was desirous to try the effect of Magnetism. Tonical applications, and even the exercise of riding on horseback, excited in him a degree of irritation, the consequences of which greatly enervated him. Magnetism produced the same effect, and he was compelled to relinquish it at the end of five or six days.

I know not how far Magnetism may be efficacious in scrophulous and scorbutic affections; I never had an opportunity of witnessing the cure of those diseases by its application, but it will always be salutary in restoring strength and removing many complaints connected with the principal affection; besides, there are various facts, related in the memoirs of the Strasburgh society, which should induce us to try its operation. I do not believe that Magnetism can destroy any radical taint in the blood or in the humours, when that taint has existed from infancy, and is to a certain degree inherent in the constitution⁽⁹⁰⁾. I have seen cures, or at least a great amelioration, produced by Magnetism, in cases of Palsy (*Paralysis*); and shall hereafter have occasion to cite a very curious fact relative to this disorder.

I have magnetised three different patients afflicted with

tumours in the breast; two of them I entirely cured; in the third, the tumour was diminished by five sixths, and there remained only a small *nucleus*, which was probably schirrous, but it has neither increased in size, nor occasioned any pain, for these eight years past. Two persons of my acquaintance have accomplished similar cures; and we are informed, by a letter from M. Malzac (a physician at Castres), to M. Archbold (a physician at Bordeaux), that having consulted M. de la Mure, dean of the university of Montpellier, respecting the case of a lady who had a schirrous tumour in her breast, that celebrated practitioner informed him he had seen a similar tumour cured by Magnetism, and advised its application on that occasion. I think, therefore, I am justified in recommending Magnetism for this complaint; but I would observe, that if the tumour be of long standing and adherent, it will require considerable time and patience.

The efficacy of Magnetism in nervous disorders has been much vaunted. These disorders may arise from opposite causes; they may proceed either from atony or from irritation. In the latter case, I doubt whether Magnetism would be very salutary; at least, I am bound to confess that I have never myself cured any complaint of that description: I have even observed that an excessive irritation of the nerves tends to oppose magnetical effects.

I have treated a dropsical patient, who was almost beyond the hope of recovery; and, in addition to the dropsy, he was afflicted with a nervous complaint of long standing. I produced a radical cure of the dropsy, and of several other disorders with which it was complicated; but the nervous affection baffled all my efforts. On those days when it was most violent, I was scarcely able to produce any action upon him; and it was with great difficulty that I obtained magnetical sleep, which, even when produced, was not so tranquil as usual. The case is different, with regard to spasmodic and convulsive affections of the stomach and abdominal region, which are allayed by Magnetism.

in a surprising manner. I know, indeed, that other magnetisers have cured nervous disorders; but I am to relate only what has fallen under my immediate observation. The inference deducible from this, is the falsity of the assertion that Magnetism has the greatest efficacy upon nervous disorders (⁹¹).

It is a principle established by Mesmer and generally adopted by magnetisers, that Magnetism accelerates the progressive march of diseases; but in accelerating the crises, it also imparts the necessary strength for supporting them.

I should observe that, when a person is seized with a complication of disorders, of which only one exhibits obvious symptoms, it often happens that Magnetism exerts its action exclusively upon one of those disorders, and that it is only in the progress of the cure that the others develop themselves: this circumstance occasions singular variations and crises, in the treatment of chronical complaints. When one of the disorders thus complicated has been removed, it becomes much more easy to subdue the others; but it often requires considerable time; and a prudent magnetiser will pause, before he undertakes the treatment of a very serious and long standing chronical disorder: if he be not certain that he can continue his attentions to the patient, it would be much better not to commence (⁹²).

I have said, in the preceding part, that Magnetism can never be injurious; but have added, *provided it be applied with proper precautions*. What those precautions are, I trust I have sufficiently explained. If any future experiments should tend to modify the instructions I have given, they will certainly confirm, at the same time, the opinion upon which they rest, and of which the following is a recapitulation.

There are diseases which Magnetism cannot cure, either because they are in themselves incurable, or because they have not been taken in time; there are others where it would not be advisable, and where it might aggravate the complaint, if obstinately persisted in; there are some in which relief only can

be obtained, but cannot be radically cured by that means ; and there are others which it cannot remove without the co-operation of other remedies ; but there are, likewise, diseases which it radically cures, without the progress of convalescency, and among these I have no doubt there are many which would have resisted every means employed in the common course of medical practice. This is a sufficient reason for employing Magnetism, but not for absolutely rejecting the assistance of physic ; which is preferable in many cases, and in others should be combined with Magnetism as an auxiliary, or eligible remedy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of magnetical Somnambulism.

OF all the phenomena which have been observed in magnetical treatments, the most astonishing and the most inconceivable are those of Somnambulism. The descriptions which have been given of those phenomena often present incredible details. But we should not therefore be discouraged : let us first be certain whether such a state exists, and we will afterwards discuss what should be received concerning it, and what should be rejected.

The proofs which I have adduced, to establish the reality of magnetical action itself, may all of them be applied to Somnambulism ; and we ought to examine the accounts of the phenomena presented by somnambulists, by the test of those principles already laid down. I might, therefore, confine myself to simply referring to the various works published by different magnetisers, since the year 1784 ; but those works are not in the hands of every one ; and though it might be easy to procure them, yet a desire to do so will exist only in proportion as there is a commencement of belief. In order to inspire a wish to read

them, some idea must be given of the facts which they contain, and some answer to those objections which deter many persons from examining what appears to them intrinsically absurd. The fear, therefore, of falling into repetitions, must not prevent me from dwelling upon this subject.

It is now nearly thirty years since the state of Somnambulism first attracted the attention of magnetisers. They have all acknowledged its reality, and the greater part have produced it themselves;—they have been eager to exhibit that phenomenon, not only to their friends, but to every one whom they were desirous of convincing; and I have no hesitation in affirming that it has been witnessed, in France, by more than fifty thousand persons.

Let us now ascertain, first, whether magnetisers have attempted to impose upon the world; secondly, whether somnambulists have practised any deception upon them; thirdly, whether the state of Somnambulism be only one of those fantastical and incomprehensible effects produced by a disordered imagination,—and whether those who believed themselves to be somnambulists did or did not (though in a very singular state) really present any of the phenomena which were supposed to be observed, (such as the faculty of seeing with their eyes shut, of hearing only their magnetiser, of perceiving the magnetical fluid, of knowing the cause of their actual complaints, and of having a presentiment of their future ones); fourthly and lastly, whether those phenomena be capable of explanation, and what should be thought of the explanations which have been given of them.

The supposition that magnetisers have had any intention to impose, is so hostile to probability, that I do not think it necessary to be discussed. It will be sufficient to observe, that they who have borne testimony to the fact, in writing, are very numerous; that they are not formed into any society; that among them are many physicians, and men eminently enlightened; that several of them were incredulous at first, and that they have witnessed the phenomena, at various times and in

various countries, often upon the same individual, during many successive months, and again upon different individuals.

With regard to the sincerity and veracity of somnambulists, I certainly do not exaggerate, when I affirm that more than two thousand have been observed since the year 1784. In that number, there were many country people who had no idea of the effects of Magnetism, who even had never heard it mentioned, and who did not know how to read; there were also men of grave character, respectable mothers of families, young girls possessing modesty and reserve, and even children.

Some examples have been cited, of pretended somnambulists who played off their jokes upon the subject. I know not whether those accounts be true; but, even if they were, they would not, in any manner, invalidate the serious testimonies given by persons who could have no interest in promoting deception. It is certain that many somnambulists have insisted upon not being shewn in that state, except to their relations or intimate friends; and these individuals, at least, could not have affected to sleep two or three hours a day, for six consecutive months, merely to cajole their magnetiser.

Some sceptics who have been admitted to the exhibition of magnetical treatments, and who could not suspect the integrity either of the magnetiser or of the somnambulist, have said, "This is very extraordinary; but all that we perceive is a kind of sleep, or nervous crisis, in which the patient speaks;—neither the faculty of seeing with the eyes shut, nor that of foreknowledge, appears to us to be proved."

To this I reply, that if we seriously examine some of the accounts of these phenomena, our doubts must disappear. Consult the various journals that have been kept of magnetical treatments; consult the letters written from different countries to the Marquis de Puységur and to M. Tardy; and you will find that the same phenomena are produced every where, accompanied with the same essential circumstances. Somnambulists may possess more or less perspicacity;

they may, as such, be more or less perfect; they may present varied phenomena; but the faculty of seeing, while their eyes are closed,—the intimate connection between them and their magnetiser,—the developement of their intellectual powers,—the perception of their internal organization,—and their prescience of approaching maladies, almost always accompany their condition. Still further—and the fact is extremely remarkable, the greater part of somnambulists perceive and describe the magnetical fluid in the same manner; they all indicate the same processes to be employed,—the same precautions to be taken; and I can conscientiously affirm that, before having perused any of the writings relative to Somnambulism, I had somnambulists under my direction, who certainly had not read those works any more than myself, and who, notwithstanding, communicated to me the same things, and gave exactly the same advice as I afterwards found in the writings of M. Tardy and others. I declare also that it was not until after a long period, and then only from the result of a series of experiments, that I became convinced of the accuracy of those details which they imparted, and of the importance of the counsels given by them. I have likewise to remark that we possess a great number of letters, written by persons who, having attempted to magnetise for the first time, produced the state of Somnambulism; and that all those letters disclose the same circumstances, with respect to the principal phenomenon.

How then are we to account for this consonancy between the relations of observers unknown to each other, who inhabit different countries, and many of whom had so little conception of the state they produced, that they were not only surprised but even terrified at it? All the other effects of Magnetism may perhaps be attributed, by many, to the influence of imagination; but it is absolutely impossible to ascribe these to such a cause. A person may fancy that he feels heat or cold, pain or ease; a disease may be cured by imagination, but imagination could not enable Mademoiselle N**** to ascertain that she

had the tape worm (*tania*), and to foresee that, on such a day and at such an hour, she would experience a crisis of a particular description.

It has been said that several somnambulists, in describing their condition, the seat of their malady, and the crisis which was to operate their cure, have done so in a manner contrary to the received notions of anatomical knowledge. It belongs to the faculty to determine whether that objection is correct; but I may be permitted to observe, that somnambulists are not anatomists,—that they may erroneously denominate any particular part of their frame—and that, in order to be entitled to our confidence, it is sufficient if they be not deceived as to the effects which they announce.

I once cast a medical person into the somnambulist state. He described his complaint to me, in technical terms, and with details which were extremely curious; they were indeed such as he would not have employed in conversing with me, had he been awake: a peasant could not have used the same expressions, but he would have foretold the same issue of his disorder. Besides, the state of a living man may be very different,—not with regard to the situation of the various parts of the human body, but as to their action, from what we observe in anatomical dissections.—In the collections of the Medical School, at Paris, there are the muscles of a woman who, during her illness, swallowed needles: she lived a long time, and the muscles of her body were filled with needles crossed in every direction: I have myself observed the thigh, which contained several hundred of them.—How could these needles penetrate to the muscles, without injuring any of the vital organs?

I must confess, however, that in the accounts which have been given of somnambulists, there are some circumstances which are doubtful, while others are absolutely false, and prove only the enthusiasm and ignorance of those who related them. These circumstances, which ought to be rejected, do not invalidate the truth of other facts; any more than the deception of a few

pretended somnambulists precludes the reality of others, or than the artifices of empiricism prevent physics from being a real science. Whoever pays attention to the works of the Marquis de Puységur and M. Tardy cannot entertain a doubt, as to the facts attested by those careful observers. The utmost we can venture upon is the suspicion that, in certain cases, they may have misunderstood or misinterpreted what a somnambulist said to them.

That the phenomena of Somnambulism are incomprehensible, I admit; but does it follow, that because a thing is incomprehensible it is therefore false? It remains to ascertain whether they be contrary to the known laws of nature. We are informed of these laws, only from observation and experience; and let us examine whether observation and experience have not discovered, in all ages, phenomena similar to those which are now attempted to be denied.

The publications of physicians and of physiologists contain a variety of accounts, relative to phenomena observed in natural somnambulists, which we shall henceforth distinguish by the denomination of *Noctambulists*; and those phenomena exactly resemble what are exhibited by magnetised persons. The former act, during their sleep, in the same manner as they would do if they were awake; they write in the night, with their eyes shut, and without any light. Upon this subject, we may consult the article *Somnambulism*, in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia*, which was printed before the discovery of Magnetism. The only difference, between Noctambulists and magnetical somnambulists, is that the latter are directed, and that the former are not. It was impossible to verify the phenomenon of pre-science in Noctambulists, because they were not interrogated; but it has been ascertained that, like magnetised Somnambulists, it was not through the assistance of their eyes that they perceived external objects, and that they noticed only what more immediately occupied their minds. One of my friends, a very accurate observer, examined a Noctambulist,

and ascertained the identity of his state with that of magnetical Somnambulism (⁹³). This fact, which I knew seven and twenty years ago, is preserved in a letter written to the Marquis de Puységur and printed at page 78 of his *Recherches sur le Somnambulisme*.

In the year 1788, M. Petetin, a physician at Lyon, published a memoir on the phenomena attending Catalepsis (⁹⁴) and Somnambulism, wherein he gives an account of numerous experiments which he made upon a person afflicted with the former malady. It is essential to observe, that M. Petetin did not then believe in the efficacy of Magnetism, and that he even considered its practice as dangerous. Now the phenomena, which his cataleptic patient presented, were exactly similar to those which the most perfect and most moveable (⁹⁵) somnambulists have exhibited. M. Petetin explains them by a very ingenious anatomical and physiological theory; that theory is probably erroneous, but the phenomena are undoubted and acknowledged even by the antagonists of Magnetism.

It has been also objected, that if we admitted the truth of the foreknowledge and sagacity attributed to somnambulists, we should conclude by believing in witchcraft; but a precisely different inference is to be deduced. The knowledge possessed, respecting the state of Somnambulism, refers to natural causes those phenomena, which ignorance and superstition have ascribed to occult ones. In examining this state, we only perceive a concentration of the faculties, which produces a greater delicacy and clearness in our sensations, and more rapidity as well as facility in our intellectual operations; in a word, a sort of internal *tact*, from which the somnambulist draws his inferences. M. Tardy de Montravel, in his Essay upon Magnetical Somnambulism, refers all the phenomena to physical causes, and triumphantly refutes the objections of those who have accused magnetisers of dealing in the marvellous.

I am sufficiently aware that several enthusiasts have carried too far the inferences they drew from the pheno-

mena which fell under their observation ; and that, having ascertained that somnambulists possessed the faculty of prescience respecting certain matters and to a certain extent, they have not acknowledged the real limits of that faculty. Do we wish to avoid their errors ? If so, let us consider as certain those facts only which are well authenticated ; and when a somnambulist predicts a near event, which depends upon causes perceptible to him, let us guard against drawing this conclusion from it,—that he can also predict distant events, which are foreign to the immediate objects of his perceptions. Above all, we should be careful not to believe that his predictions are infallible, which would be at once morally dangerous and physically absurd ; for it would involve the supposition that all events are concatenated by necessity, and plunge us into the doctrine of fatalism.

If we were to suppose that the soul possessed the faculty of penetrating both the past and the future (a position which I am far from admitting), that faculty would necessarily be limited, in the same manner as the power of seeing at great distances, with our eyes, is circumscribed ; and hence it would result that our prescience must often be incomplete, and our predictions be only partially verified. Vision may exist without being distinct ; and in that case, the principal phenomenon would be actually true, though none of the particular circumstances attending it could be relied on. Besides, the distinct vision of certain things would be mingled with conjectures, with regard to different ones ; so that, if even any particular description of persons were gifted with the faculty of foreknowledge, we could not rely upon their predictions nor their prophecies. As he who distinguishes only some part of the causes which are to produce an event, does not perceive them all ; so those which are unperceived by him may, in the conclusion, produce very material differences. They who affirm that this faculty belongs to the soul, only in proportion as it is disengaged from matter, express themselves in a very obscure manner ; and even if this incomprehensible

hypothesis were conceded to them, it must still be confessed that we are liable to be deceived by the eyes of the soul, as well as by those of the body ; and that God alone is infallible, because he alone can comprehend, at a single glance, the whole together with the separate and distinct parts of any thing.

Supposing the reality of a state in which we could see without the aid of external organs, it does not follow that they who were in such a state would therefore be exempt from error ; as their prejudices would always be liable to mingle with their judgment. Their power of vision could never extend but to physical objects ; or if it extended further, no real information could be derived from their discourses. Expressing themselves in a language formed to convey ideas of things which fall under the notice of our senses, they would be compelled to represent abstract ideas by modes of speech not appropriated to the nature and quality of those ideas, and we should be misled, by receiving their metaphors as exact representations of what they intended to communicate.

It may be inferred, from these reflections, that I consider it as wholly improbable that the soul, disengaged from matter, possesses the faculty of foreknowledge ; that the physical sensations observable in somnambulists, and which result from a delicacy in the organs and an operation of the mind, have no reference to that metaphysical foresight which has been supposed to exist ; and that, even if we should admit the latter position, it would not lead us to any positive or useful knowledge.

The accounts which have been given, of the phenomena referable to the state of Somnambulism, offer numerous instances of the errors into which those persons are liable to fall who generalise too much the consequences of any fact ; who, instead of adhering only to what is sufficiently ascertained, surrender themselves to conjectures ; and who endeavour to build a theory upon a small number of circumstances, without attending to the numerous objections which might be urged against it.

Let us confine ourselves to what observation and experience teach, and be careful not to go beyond it. I shall proceed simply to narrate what I have seen myself, and what has been seen by at least five hundred persons worthy of credit, who have furnished written attestations of the truth; and certainly by more than fifty thousand others, who have been satisfied with verbally delivering their testimony to persons of their acquaintance. If I indulge in a few explanations, and in a few theoretical principles, it will be without attaching any great importance to them, but merely in order to shew that all those facts may be admitted without recurring to an occult philosophy, or without involving any contradiction of nature's established laws: my object will be to trace a circle within which we must circumscribe ourselves, if we would admit nothing that is repugnant to reason.

When Magnetism produces the state of Somnambulism, the individual who finds himself in that state acquires a prodigious extent in the faculty of sensation; several of his external organs, particularly those of sight and of hearing, are suspended, and all the operations depending upon them take place internally. There are an infinite number of shades and varieties observable in this state; but, in order to form an accurate judgment, we should examine it in its widest departure from the state of waking, and pass over in silence every thing which has not been fully confirmed by experience.

The somnambulist has his eyes closed, and sees not by their instrumentality; neither does he hear through the medium of the auditory organs; but he does, in fact, both see and hear more distinctly than a person who is awake. He neither sees nor hears any one, except those with whom he is in affinity; he notices only that which occupies his attention, and his attention is generally confined to those objects to which the magnetiser has specially directed it. He is subjected to the will of his magnetiser, in every thing which would not be injurious to himself, and in every thing which does not militate against his ideas of

justice and truth. He has a perception of his magnetiser's will ; he perceives also the magnetical fluid ; he sees, or rather he is conscious of his own internal organization, and that of others ; but, commonly, he remarks only those parts of it which are not in a natural state and which disturb the general harmony of the whole. He discovers anew, in his memory, the remembrance of those things which he had forgotten when he was awake. He is possessed of pre-sensations and of foreknowledge, which may be erroneous in many particulars, and are limited in extent. He expresses himself with surprising facility. He is not exempt from vanity. His appropriate faculties improve of themselves, during a certain time, provided he be managed with prudence ; but he wanders into confusion, if he be improperly conducted. When he returns to his natural state, he totally loses the recollection of all the sensations and of all the ideas which he experienced as a somnambulist ; so much so, that those two conditions are as foreign to each other as if the somnambulist and the same person awake were two distinct beings.

The different characteristical features which I have assigned to Somnambulism are rarely found united in one and the same individual : the latter alone constantly occurs, and may be considered as the essential characteristic of that state. There are, for example, somnambulists whose eyes remain open ; who hear distinctly through the means of the appropriate organs, and who even preserve, with every person that may be present, the same affinity, which belongs to the state of waking ; there are others, in whom only a single faculty appears more extended, and who, with that exception, have their sensations confused and imperfect ; there are some who express themselves with much difficulty ; &c. ; but, up to the present period, there has never been a single somnambulist observed who, being awake, retained the memory of what had passed while he remained in the former state⁽⁹⁶⁾. This circumstance is so much the more important to consider, because it establishes a strong line of distinction between the states of sleep and of Somnambulism,—between the sensations of somnambulists and

our nightly dreams. All the ideas which we have had while asleep, and which may be recalled when awake, are nothing more than dreams. Hence, so far from the phenomena of Somnambulism leading to a belief in dreams, they should have a direct tendency to destroy that belief; they explain even the reason why some celebrated physicians of antiquity have affirmed that, during sleep, the soul was more intelligent, and that it had a presentiment of the evils which threatened the body: it is because they had observed the phenomenon of Somnambulism, but did not distinguish it from the ordinary state of sleep.

While on this subject, I shall mention a very extraordinary psychological phenomenon; it is that of somnambulists who have spoken concerning themselves as if their individual, in the waking state and in that of Somnambulism, were two different persons. The following are examples.

Mademoiselle Adelaïde le F****, who, without having been magnetised, presented all the phenomena of Somnambulism⁽⁹⁷⁾, possessed (according to the narrator of her singular disease) no idea of *self*, properly speaking; she would never allow the identity of *Adelaïde* and *Petite*, a name which she received and gave to herself during her delirium.

Madame N****, who had received a distinguished education, having lost her fortune by the issue of a law suit, determined with the consent of her husband to perform upon the stage, where her talents would secure her certain success and considerable emolument. While occupied with this project, she was taken ill and was cast into the state of Somnambulism. As she expressed, in that state, different sentiments respecting her theatrical intentions, from what she had before announced, the magnetiser induced her to explain herself; and he obtained answers, of a description very contrary to what he expected.—Why then will you go upon the stage?—It is not I, it is *she*.—But why do you not endeavour to dissuade her from it?—What would you have me say to her: she is mad*.

* I received this anecdote from the magnetiser himself, whose exactitude and veracity are well known to me.

From a concurrence of the various circumstances attending the state of somnambulism, and which I have described, there resulted some singular phenomena, which have induced certain enthusiastic magnetisers to conceive there might be, in that state, an action of the soul independent of the body, and even a communication with celestial beings. But nothing would be gained by a recurrence to such hypotheses: we must confine ourselves to observe the facts, endeavouring to ascertain whether they be not connected by some distinct principle.

I shall venture to propose an explanation, which, if it be not accurate, is at least free from the inconvenience of opposing the known laws of physiology.

In a waking state, the outward impressions received by our organs are transmitted to the brain, in which is produced the phenomenon of sensation. Light strikes our eyes; and the nerves with which the retina is furnished, propelling to the brain the vibration they receive, excite there the sensation of vision. In the state of Somnambulism, the impression is communicated to the brain by the magnetical fluid. This fluid, which possesses an extreme exility, penetrates all bodies, when it is impelled with a sufficient power, and does not require to pass along the optic nerves in order to reach the brain. Hence the somnambulist, instead of receiving the sensation of visible objects by the action of light upon his eyes, receives it immediately by that of the magnetical fluid, which acts upon the internal organ of vision.

What I have said, with respect to the sight, may be equally applied to the faculty of hearing; and hence the reason why the somnambulist sees and hears, without the agency of either eyes or ears; and why he sees and hears only those objects which are in affinity with him, or which impel towards him the magnetical fluid.

Let us now pass to the consideration of other phenomena.

Somnambulists appear to be informed upon an infinite number

of matters, respecting which they were ignorant when awake; and it has been attempted to explain this by a reference to instinct. Possibly there may be something of truth in this explanation: instinct is a faculty really existing in many animals; but, as it is an occult cause, I wish it were possible to avoid its introduction in our attempts to account for the phenomena observed in mankind; and I confess that those which I have witnessed, seem to me susceptible of explanation without any reference to it.

In fact, it is by no means proved that we have, in the state of Somnambulism, any knowledge which we did not possess when awake (⁹⁸); the only difference is, that in the former condition our sensations are infinitely more delicate,—that we have a distinct remembrance of every thing which we have known, or by which we have been affected, and that we possess an extraordinary facility in combining our ideas; those circumstances are sufficient to produce very singular results.

All the sensations which we have experienced in the course of our lives have left impressions within the brain. Most of those impressions are slight, and we do not perceive them, because we are prevented by the passing sensations of the moment; but they actually exist, and it often happens that things which we had forgotten present themselves again to our memory, when any casual circumstance excites this faculty.

Thus a somnambulist may recal a conversation which he has heard, or some book which he has read, without its being considered as contrary to the natural order of things; and it is in the same manner that he recalls the impressions he has experienced. In order for him to know what effect such or such alimentary substance will produce upon his organization, it is sufficient that he has once tasted of it.

A somnambulist who habitually speaks in his provincial dialect, will perhaps express himself in a very good phraseology, because he has heard correct language spoken,—because he remembers it,

and because he is not prevented by timidity from employing it ; yet he certainly will not speak a language which he has never before heard nor understood.

A somnambulist has the perception of his magnetiser's will, and performs a thing which is demanded of him mentally and without the intervention of words. In order to explain this phenomenon, we must consider somnambulists under the same aspect as loadstones, but endowed with infinite mobility : there is not a single movement that takes place in the brain of their magnetiser, but what is repeated in their own, or at least of which they do not become sensible. It is known that, if we place near each other two musical instruments in exact unison, and if we cause the cords of one to vibrate, the corresponding cords of the other will spontaneously emit a similar sound : this physical phenomenon resembles that which takes place in Magnetism.

If a somnambulist announce that, several months hence, he will be afflicted with some particular disease, it is because he beholds the effect in the cause, and perceives the necessary operations of his organs, together with the consequences of his actual state ; saving any accidental circumstances that may occur from foreign causes. He explains how any existing complaint has been developed in himself, or in an individual with whom he has an affinity ; and in the latter case, it is because he notices the cause in the actual effect.

A somnambulist descants upon metaphysical and psychological subjects,—he delivers, with a fluent and vivid elocution, the most singular reveries ; the reason of which is, that he has been driven into an imaginary world by the magnetiser himself ; and the moment he ceases to speak of what he really feels, in order to communicate what he only fancies, his wanderings are the greater in proportion as his imagination is more exalted.

In a word, the somnambulist possesses no other faculties than what belong to the state of waking ; but those faculties are exerted with much greater freedom, they are much more extended, more delicate, and therefore more disposed to deviate,

when he transgresses the proper limits of those matters upon which his judgment can well be exercised.

Somnambulism and its effects are sufficiently marvellous of themselves, without our endeavouring to exaggerate this quality in its appropriate phenomena, by making them depend upon a supernatural principle, and explaining them by an unintelligible theory.

I have seen a young girl of sixteen years of age, who certainly had never read any medical books, dictate treatises upon several diseases. It was myself who put the questions to her, which she could not have anticipated, and to which she answered with clearness and precision. This experiment, which has been repeated upon other somnambulists, suggests to me two important remarks.

I, one day, requested of this somnambulist some information respecting the gout, and the means of curing it. "I know nothing about it," said she, "for I never had the gout."—"But, you have spoken to me respecting an inflammation of the lungs, and you never had that disease."—"That is a different thing: as I am liable to be attacked with the latter complaint, I perceive from what causes it might proceed, and what would be the consequences: I have not the radical principle of the gout, and I know not what it is; but show me some gouty person, if you wish that I should examine his state and speak to you upon the subject."

The second observation is, that in the little treatises which this young person dictated to me, upon several diseases, it was easy to ascertain the period at which they were composed; I mean that they contained some principles according to which those diseases were then considered, and which subsequent observations had rectified; which proves that her mind was then impressed with what she had heard mentioned upon the subject, and that she mingled her own ideas with this: it proves also that we ought to distrust the opinions delivered by somnambulists, whenever they speak of any thing which they do not distinctly perceive.

The means we possess of exciting vivid sensations in a somnambulist; of allaying his pains; of impressing a particular movement upon the fluid which circulates in him; of changing the succession of his ideas; of directing his attention to such or such an object, and of placing him in affinity with other persons, are apparently so minute, that I am not surprised to find men of an ardent imagination who have fancied there was some magical power employed. When, however, we have once ascertained that our will can act upon another individual, and that the magnetical fluid is the medium of that action, every thing is explained; and this phenomenon, from which all the others result, becomes a primitive fact firmly established by experience. The magnetical fluid possesses an extreme tenuity, and one single atom of it can convey its determinate motion to an entire mass of the same fluid, as a spark of fire may set a whole forest in flames. There is nothing contrary to the usual order of things in all this: we daily witness facts which prove the extreme exility of those atoms which act upon our senses, and how greatly disproportionate the effects they produce appear to the cause. Our attention is not sufficiently excited by these circumstances, as the following examples will illustrate.

There are odoriferous substances which retain and diffuse their fragrancy during centuries, without any sensible diminution of their weight or bulk. Thus a single grain of amber, placed in a room, will impregnate it for many years with an odorous vapour which is incessantly renewed; while there is not a single portion of the circumambient atmosphere but what partakes of it.

We see spaniels and water-dogs who will bring up, from the bottom of a river, the stone which their master has thrown there. It is sufficient that this stone has been merely touched by him, in order to retain, in the water, emanations which act sensibly upon the olfactory nerves of the animal. Now, a somnambulist possesses a delicacy of sense, far superior to the faculty of smelling, in a dog; and the fluid which acts upon him is much more,

subtile than any of the emanations which issue from odoriferous bodies.

Will it be said, that the tenuity of the atoms composing this fluid is likely to diminish the force of their action? Observe what takes place in the galvanic pile: it is sufficient to dispose plates of different metals one upon another, in order that a matter, which before was imperceptible, shall form a current rapid enough to decompose the salts and fusc the metallic substances. The rotation of a glass cylinder, upon a cushion, sets the electrical fluid in motion; and by directing that fluid with a conductor, we can produce, at any given distance, effects similar to those of lightning.

The miasms which arise from contagious disorders, and which float in the atmosphere, or adhere to different bodies, escape not only the action of our senses, but also every chemical analyse; yet they produce, in the animal economy, the utmost degree of perturbation.

Will it be further said, that the effects of Somnambulism are not to be analysed like those of electricity, and that every one cannot verify them in the same manner? Then I reply, that if the law which governs the movement of electrical fluid be well known, the principle which determinates that law is yet undiscovered; and so it is with regard to Somnambulism: the effects are always uniform, and the primitive cause alone remains to be ascertained.—I reply, in the second place, that it is not more difficult to establish the phenomena of somnambulism, than those of galvanism; and that, in order to reproduce them, it is only necessary to magnetise with a strict adherence to the requisite conditions. The effects do not always invariably manifest themselves; but how many experiments relative to electricity may also fail, in consequence of the state of the atmosphere. If you succeed not to-day, continue your experiments on the following days; and in the one case, as in the other, I venture to affirm that you will witness the promised effects.

It is said, finally, that the phenomena attending the state of

Somnambulism are not always alike ; which I admit. But will you deny the declination of the compass needle, because that declination is variable, and because you are equally uninformed, both of the law on which this variation depends and of the cause of the principal fact ?

All the effects of Somnambulism can be referred to one single cause ; they are identical as to their principles, and modified only in their circumstances.

There remains yet a few words to be said respecting the most incomprehensible phenomenon, that of the affinity which many somnambulist declare to exist between them and various objects, in consequence of which they perceive those objects although at considerable distances.

When we have attended to a certain number of magnetical treatments, and have read the different accounts given of them, it becomes difficult to deny this fact. However, I must premise that, as every somnambulist does not possess this faculty, the proofs of its existence are much less numerous than those of the other phenomena ; and I require of no person to believe in so extraordinary a circumstance, except so far as he has been able to verify it himself.

Let me, for a moment, assume the fact as if it were incontestible, and be allowed to offer a few reflections upon the subject.

All bodies throughout nature, and from which we are not separated by other opaque bodies, make us sensible of their existence by propelling rays of light, to our eyes ; all sonorous bodies render themselves likewise sensible to our ears, when they perform vibrations which are propagated in the air,—and still more promptly, when they traverse the hardest substances ; the appropriate fluid of the common magnet passes through many *media*, which would arrest the propagation of light and that of sound ; electricity is conveyed instantaneously to the greatest distances, by following the conducting bodies. It hence results that, by the intermediate agency of different fluids, a communication is susceptible of being established between bodies which are at great

distances from each other. If it be true, as I think I have proved it, that the magnetical fluid penetrates every thing, it may in the same manner become a medium of communication between various bodies, and convey to living beings, when they are disposed to receive its influence, a consciousness of what is passing at a distance from them. To accomplish this, it is sufficient that they fix their attention upon an object, and that there be an affinity, or connection antecedently established between them and that object.

In admitting this principle however, we must also admit an analogy between the manner in which this fluid operates, and that in which the other fluids already mentioned operate also.

The impressions produced by outward objects diminish in their intensity, according to the distance at which they are placed. The further remote we are from any object, the fewer are the rays of light which it propels to our eyes; and the sound of a bell is weaker in proportion as we are distant from it, until at last it becomes no longer audible. The impressions produced upon somnambulists may be considered as impaired, in a similar manner, by distance.

Thus it does not follow, that because a somnambulist is sensible of his magnetiser's action at a distance of twenty paces, he would feel it at a distance of twenty thousand; nor that, because he can see what is taking place at a distance of three miles, his faculty of vision has no limits whatever. These limits indeed are not accurately known; they are greater or less, according to the degree of sensibility possessed by the somnambulist, but they undoubtedly exist, and we must be careful not to remove them beyond what experience has decidedly established.

What I have said, respecting space, will equally apply to time. Foreknowledge is the more uncertain, as the events to which they refer are more distant.

I shall be told, perhaps, that electricity reaches with the same energy the extremity of a conductor ten thousand fathoms in length, as it does that of a conductor only one fathom. This is

true ; but it is because the electrical fluid follows a determinate path, and that it is conveyed in a whole mass from one place to another. Perhaps it will be said that a similar conductor, though invisible, may exist between the magnetiser and the somnambulist,—between a mother and her child. This is very possible, but it is only an hypothesis ; and, in order to admit such an explanation, it would be necessary to have collected a greater number of facts, and facts of a more conclusive nature than those which have hitherto presented themselves. If we wish that the theory of Magnetism should become as certain and distinct as other physical theories, it is essential to establish it only upon facts perfectly authenticated, and which have been repeatedly observed : if the belief be requisite, in order to produce an action, doubt itself is no less so, for the purpose of explaining and generalizing the facts.

Aristotle, who was of all philosophers the greatest enemy of the marvellous, has given, respecting the foreknowledge which takes place during sleep and is relative to diseases, an explanation perfectly applicable to the same phenomenon in somnambulists. He says that, in our waking state, the impressions which we receive from external objects being very strong, they absorb our attention and prevent us from noticing those slight sensations which arise within us ; and that, during sleep, on the contrary, we become sensible of these internal movements. Now, diseases, like all other events, are gradually prepared by various minute causes ; and the derangement by which a disease announces itself, which is hereafter to be developed, is more easily perceived during sleep than while we are awake*. He

* *Dicunt clarissimi medici observanda esse somnia diligenter. Quod eum omnes qui arte quavis præditi sunt existimare debent, tum vel maxime ii quibus aliquid propositum est ad considerandum, quique philosophantur. Motus enim qui interdum existunt, nisi permagni sint et vehementes, à majoribus qui vigilantibus incidunt obscurantur. Quod contra fit in somno ubi perexigui magni videntur esse Ita fit ut quoniam omnium rerum parva sunt initia, perspicuum sit morborum etiam esse, aliarumque affectionum quæ in corporibus*

adds, that these visions are not always realized, because some unforeseen circumstance opposes the natural developement which had been announced.

The nature of our dreams, when lively or mournful, agreeable or frightful, may to a certain degree indicate the state of the stomach and that of the nerves, but there is a very great difference between them and the description of foreknowledge which is here understood; and I cannot persuade myself that Aristotle confounded two operations of the mind so dissimilar, or that he had any confidence in those ideas which occupy the imagination during an ordinary state of sleep.

Many physicians, both ancient and modern, agree that, in the crises of certain disorders, a very astonishing degree of foreknowledge manifests itself. I shall have occasion to recur to this subject, in the second part.

I have said that somnambulists perceive only in succession, the different parts of any object; that they do not perceive them at all, until after an attentive examination; and that precipitation, the influence of imagination, or the ideas suggested by the magnetiser himself, may corrupt the accuracy of their judgment. It is of importance, therefore, not to interrogate them except upon such things as they distinctly behold; not to hurry them, but to appear cool in their presence, and to calm their imagination, instead of exciting it; never to direct their attention upon matters which are beyond their grasp; never to rely on their predictions, unless so far as they relate to their own condition; not to re-

posteris temporibus existunt. Ex quo illud etiam perspicuum est, necesse esse hæc ipsa à dormientibus magis animadverti ac notari, quàm à vigilantibus neque mirum videri debet si pleraque somnia non creniant Si qua enim vis alia major oriatur, quàm à quâ originem erat res habitura, non sequitur id cujus erat significatio, et pleraque eorum quæ rectè agenda censuimus à valentioribus causis dirempta sunt. Omnino enim non omne quod futurum fuit evenit, etc.

De divinatione per somnium. J. Perionio interpret. Arist. oper. omn. Basil. 1563. t. 3. p. 456.

quire their instructions, respecting matters with which they would not occupy themselves naturally and with personal concern,—and always to consult the dictates of prudence, before we follow their advice.

I have also said, that somnambulists are not exempt from vanity. When we listen to them with too much confidence, when we propose difficult questions to them, and when we manifest any astonishment at their perspicacity, they yield to a desire of producing interest and wonder, and in such cases may perhaps utter every kind of wild and fanciful opinions.

It is but seldom that a somnambulist attains, on the first days, to the full extent of that clear perception of which he is susceptible. He must gradually become familiarised with his new condition,—acquire a facility in combining his ideas, and be able thoroughly to comprehend those subjects upon which, in the first instance, he may have only imperfectly glanced. In general he improves, as long as his disease retains its primitive character; and his faculties diminish in proportion as he approaches towards the cure: sometimes a slight vexation, an accidental inconvenience, or even some particular crisis, may cause him suddenly to descend from the point which he had attained; but he afterwards returns to it. We should expose ourselves to incessant mistakes, if we did not carefully discriminate these various gradations; and we should prevent the entire development of the somnambulist's faculties, if we attempted to accelerate the gradual progress of nature.

When the disposition to somnambulism has continued for a considerable time, it terminates by approximating the state of waking; prejudices then begin to mingle with sensations, and we ought not to grant any confidence to somnambulists who have declined from the point which they had attained, and who preserve a disposition to be cast into somnambulism after their cure has taken place.

The management of somnambulists is a matter of extreme

importance : it requires, on the part of the magnetiser, much prudence, coolness, and even some degree of instruction.

If, by the energy of our will, we do not produce in somnambulists a concentration of their faculties, they take no trouble to exert that of internal vision. If, on the contrary, the somnambulists are too much urged, they then deviate into extravagance, the springs of their mind become too intensely stretched ;—we may even reduce them to idiotism, and produce in them nervous diseases, which it would be very difficult afterwards to cure.

The questions which ought to be put to a somnambulist may be reduced to the following series.—Are you asleep ?—How long will it be necessary to leave you asleep ?—When should you be cast again into a crisis ?—Do you perceive your complaint ?—What is the cause of it ?—Do you perceive the remedy you want ?—When will you perceive it ?—Seek out for that remedy ? What precautions must be taken for preserving your health after you are cured ?

When you wish to consult a somnambulist respecting some other patient, you must manifest that desire to him ; but do not exact any thing, nor accept his kind offices but so far only as it may be agreeable to himself, and as he assures you that his perspicacity can be depended upon.

The patient being introduced, at the hour desired by the somnambulist, he must be touched by him with proper precaution ; admitting always that the latter does not feel too great a repugnance, nor apprehend any danger to arise from it. You will forewarn him to say nothing which might make the patient uneasy⁽⁹⁹⁾, whom he should be requested to examine with attention ; you may retire at some distance, if he wishes it, but without ceasing to be occupied with what he is about, or even to keep your eyes upon him. Afterwards, when the patient has withdrawn, you will ask the somnambulist what he thinks of that patient's complaint, and what are the means of curing it ; then write down his advice, in order that it may be communi-

cated where necessary. It will further be proper to discuss such advice with an enlightened physician, who will adopt the same, if unattended with any inconvenience (¹⁰⁰).

We should take great care not to introduce several patients to a somnambulist without intermission, nor to repeat such consultations too often; for they are generally fatiguing, and even might be sometimes dangerous to him (¹⁰¹). It is unnecessary to add, that we ought carefully to ascertain, before we consult a somnambulist, that he is wholly uninfluenced by any other motive than a desire to promote the patient's good.

In no case whatever must the magnetiser allow even the most trivial mark of acknowledgment, to be given to the somnambulist; nor should the latter, after being awake, entertain the smallest suspicion of his having been consulted. The slightest taint of interested motives would adulterate the purity of a communication, which must subsist by the medium of benevolence alone: such an occurrence might cause the sincerity of the somnambulist to be suspected; it would give a sanction to the animadversions of the enemies of Magnetism; and it might even lead to dangerous abuses, by instigating unprincipled empirics to feign a condition, the reality of which can be admitted only in proportion as it is placed above the reach of all objections. It is a great misfortune that some individuals, possessing excellent intentions, and perfectly disinterested as to themselves, have occasionally forgotten this rule, which should however remain absolutely without an exception (¹⁰²).

Somnambulists in whom the habit of being consulted, respecting the diseases of others, has excited too much confidence in their own sagacity, should be distrusted; they are liable to examine in too cursory a manner. Above all, as I have already observed, we should not confide in those who retain the habit of being cast into magnetical crises after their cure; the perspicacity of such somnambulists becomes very doubtful, while the

ideas appropriate to the state of waking mingle with those which ought exclusively to spring from their actual sensations.

We should conform ourselves exactly to the indications of somnambulists, concerning the hours at which they are to be magnetised, and the regimen they may have prescribed for themselves. We should be particularly careful never to interrupt any crisis. We should never exhibit somnambulists to indifferent observers, nor submit them to experiments calculated only to gratify curiosity. We should avoid directing their attention upon objects foreign to their physical sensations; for, then, they abandon themselves to the illusions of imagination, and the more so as we listen to them with the greater interest and attention. We should not forget that they are susceptible of jealousy, and must abstain from exciting that passion in them.

When we put questions to somnambulists, we should be careful not to frame them in such a manner as to suggest the answers. We should strenuously endeavour to dismiss from our mind every idea which might have an influence upon their determination. We ought to keep ourselves perfectly calm and tranquil; because any agitation which we experience will most certainly be communicated to them.

We should never suffer them to suppose, when awake, that they have spoken during magnetical sleep; on the contrary, they should be left, as far as possible, to imagine that they had been in a natural one; and precautions ought to be taken, that no person informs them of their really being somnambulists. There may be an exception to this rule, but only in case of positive necessity; where the somnambulist himself anticipates no inconvenience from it,—where he assures the magnetiser that it will not disturb him, or where he actually desires it.

Lastly, we should guard against surrendering to any enthusiasm on the subject,—to a desire of gratifying mere curiosity,—to any temptation of displaying or relating surprising things; we should be anxious only to promote the good of the patient

under our care, and to render him capable of doing good to others.

I have expressly observed, that there is no connection between Somnambulism and the state of waking; that two distinct orders of ideas prevail in these respective conditions; that, in each of them, we neither see nor feel in the same manner, and that, in passing from the state of Somnambulism into the other, we entirely forget every thing which we had thought and experienced in the first. This oblivion constitutes a real advantage. If we retained the remembrance of those ideas which essentially belong to the state of Somnambulism, they would be blended with those which are usually conveyed to us through the medium of our senses, and are treasured up in our memory; we should not find ourselves in a natural state, or in unison with the rest of mankind. This inconvenience may arise from the magnetiser's own imprudence; I ought therefore to notice the causes from which it is liable to proceed, and the dangers with which it would be attended.

When the state of Somnambulism is prolonged, beyond that period during which it constitutes a crisis necessary for curing the patient;—when the somnambulist, having occasion no longer to be occupied with his own complaints, has his attention directed upon other objects, in order to elicit from him something that may surprise;—or when his imagination becomes exalted,—it happens that the nerves of the brain acquire an increased irritability, and that such disposition continuing after the somnambulist is awake, he retains a susceptibility which renders him sensible to the slightest impressions. In this disposition, he enjoys more intensely the beauties of nature, he surrenders himself up to tender emotions, he experiences a sort of enthusiasm; all which ought to be studiously avoided, because it tends to impede the rectitude of his judgment. Nor is this the only danger likely to arise. When a somnambulist is too long occupied with ideas foreign to those which are appropriate to his waking state, the brain will retain traces of those ideas; and

if, when he is returned to his natural state, it should happen that any thing revives them, it produces a species of mental derangement very difficult to cure. In case of such an unfortunate accident taking place, it would be proper to dispel, in the patient's mind, the ideas by which he is the most agreeably affected—incite him to bodily exercise,—occupy him with manual labour, and speak to him of nothing that is contrary to his usual habits of life.

There are somnambulists who find themselves so contented in that state, as to desire that they were not withdrawn from it; but the magnetiser should never allow them to continue in it any longer than is absolutely necessary; nor should he maintain in them too great a propensity to somnambulism. When this state is produced naturally, as a means of curing the patient, it is then a crisis eminently beneficial; otherwise, when it has become a habit in the individual, it constitutes a disorder of the brain, which it is dangerous to excite.

The dangers I have mentioned will never arise when the magnetiser is actuated solely by the desire of producing salutary effects, and when he attempts to obtain somnambulism with no other view than that of curing his patients,—but on no account to gratify mere curiosity.

Somnambulism does sometimes exhibit all the outward appearances of the state of waking; and then it may be prolonged without any inconvenience to the patient, provided he has declared it to be beneficial. I shall make this more explicit, by relating a fact which occurred under my own observation.

A young lady of nineteen, and who had been in bad state of health during the three last years, had recourse to Magnetism; in consequence of which she became a somnambulist, at the expiration of one month's treatment. When she entered into that state, her eyes closed; but, at the end of half an hour, she usually requested to have them opened, without her being awake⁽¹⁰³⁾—which was done by passing the fingers over her eyelids; and she thus remained, having the faculty of free communication with

every person present ; this, during more or less time. After having sedulously sought for the means of curing herself, she at length declared there was only one way of doing it ; which was to convey her into the country, and compel her to take, either on foot or in a cart, exercise sufficiently violent to produce a crisis, which at first would appear to increase her illness. Her elder sister, by whom she was magnetised, not being able to accompany her, she was attended by her mother. Having been cast into somnambulism on the evening preceding her departure, she desired to be left in that state until she should spontaneously awake ; and gave this reason for it, that she would be better able to find out the proper remedy for herself, of which she afterwards would not object to make use : this crisis of somnambulism continued without interruption during eight days ; and it was not until the ninth, that nature restored her spontaneously to her natural state. Her mother, who had not quitted her one moment, afterwards informed her of every circumstance which had occurred in that interval of time ; in order that those who had seen her, without having any suspicion of her actual condition, might not suppose she had lost her memory. Her residence in the country continued for three weeks ; the crisis which she had announced took place ; she prescribed what was necessary to be done, and on her return had perfectly recovered her health.

I shall conclude this chapter by recurring to an opinion which I have already expressed, and which many persons may consider as a paradox. It is, that Magnetism would generally have produced more good effects, if those who were conscious of their magnetical powers had exerted them without any knowledge of somnambulism. It is so difficult to occupy ourselves exclusively with the cure of a patient who exhibits such marvellous phenomena, that very few persons are capable of that reserve which would be desirable. Now, when a patient is induced to think, to speak, and to render an account of his sensations, the magnetical action is directed upon the nerves and the brain, and be-

comes less salutary than when that action is left at the disposal of nature's operation. Besides, the state of somnambulism requires a multitude of precautions and of diligent cares, which it is dangerous to neglect. Hence it follows, that the proper management of a very susceptible somnambulist demands the application of leisure,—tranquillity, and an unlimited devotion to the object. I am persuaded that, though there may be many patients cured in consequence only of their having become somnambulists, there are also a great number to whom that crisis has been more injurious than useful, and who would have been more certainly cured if they had never experienced it (¹⁰⁴).

I am deeply anxious to succeed in convincing my readers of the reality and efficacy of Magnetism; but I attach no importance to convincing them as to the reality of the various phenomena attending the state of somnambulism. I was bound to notice the subject, in order that they might not find themselves perplexed whenever that crisis naturally offered itself; but it would be of little consequence if they were not to believe a single word of what I have said respecting it. They are competent to relieve the sick, and to operate the cure of diseases, just the same, by touching them with patience, with attention, and with the proper exercise of volition.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the inconveniences, the dangers, and the abuses of Magnetism.

THERE is nothing good in itself which may not be abused ; but we must not condemn a practice whose advantages surpass its inconveniences, and especially when those inconveniences may be easily avoided.

The original advocates for Magnetism promulgated it as a universal remedy ; they ventured to affirm its ability to cure nervous diseases, by its immediate agency, and other complaints by its mediate effects ; they pretended that there existed but one disorder,—and to this, one remedy only. Such propositions, with various similar ones, involved a great deal of exaggeration, to say the least of them, and were calculated to determine the rejection of that doctrine, altogether, by enlightened men.

I not only disbelieve that Magnetism could cure every kind of disease, but I am persuaded that it cures only the smaller number,—that it more frequently relieves, than it cures a patient, and that it may sometimes be injurious.

I have already said enough respecting the advantages of Magnetism, both as a principal agent and as an auxiliary in the treatment of many diseases ; I shall now proceed to disclose its dangers, and the abuses to which it is exposed. In bringing the one and the other into light, I shall employ perfect candour and sincerity ; I shall consider them as resulting, whether from the nature of Magnetism itself, whether from the ignorance or the enthusiasm of those who practise it. I shall also have to say a few words concerning its inconveniences relatively to morals ; and shall commence with the latter subject, which has occasioned much declamatory criticism.

There is no doubt that Magnetism, by establishing a strong affinity between the magnetiser and the magnetised,—whether arising from a more habitual intercourse, from confidence, or from the nature of the agent itself, may produce considerable inconveniences, when employed between persons of different sexes; but it is sufficient to be aware of these inconveniences, in order not to incur the risk of them. A mother would not permit her daughter to be magnetised by a young man, even though she entertained the highest opinion of his morals and his delicacy; neither would a young married woman allow herself to be magnetised by a man of thirty, unless it was always in the presence of her husband. On the other hand, a man who is duly sensible that the practice of Magnetism is a sacred office, will always be on his guard against every thing which may excite in him any other sentiment than the desire of curing, or of relieving a suffering person; and he will adopt the most rigid precautions, that he may never have to repel from his mind ideas at which he ought to blush. The danger of which I speak is almost a nullity, when we have to treat poor country people, or persons afflicted with such severe complaints, that one can then be occupied with no other thought than that of their sufferings. With regard to the possibility of abusing Magnetism, as the means of seduction, I need not say any thing more, but that the man who could be guilty of such a crime would become an object of unmingled horror to the rest of the world.

I ought however to observe, that one of the effects of Magnetism is, sometimes, to produce a tender attachment, but which is entirely distinct from those sentiments which there would be any necessity to repel. I shall cite two examples of it.

I was in the country, at a house of whom the inhabitants were conversant on the subject of Magnetism. My health had been for some time disordered, and a young lady of our society had the kindness to magnetise me, in a chain of which her parents formed a part, as well as their friends and two or three patients. As soon as she commenced touching me, I used to

fall into a gentle slumber, which lasted during the whole sitting. At the expiration of ten or twelve days, I perceived that she inspired me with a particular degree of affection, and that I was involuntarily occupied with her. A fortnight afterwards, my health was quite recovered, and we ceased our operations. From that moment, the impression which she had made upon me gradually decreased, and I noticed her, as before, with a respectful attachment, but without any emotion whatever. In relating this fact, I can attest that, during the time her image was thus incessantly present to my mind, I never entertained a thought which could not have been avowed without giving her occasion to blush. I am however uncertain, whether this is to be accounted for upon the principle that the affections produced by Magnetism have something in them unconnected with the senses; or that the friendship and confidence with which I was honoured by the family repelled from my mind every reprehensible idea.

The second anecdote is as follows :

I have cured a patient whom I cast into a crisis on the very first day, and who, in course of a week, recovered that strength and health which he had lost for six months. I continued to magnetise him during a fortnight or three weeks : he was a principal labourer, who superintended the others in the garden and in the fields. The moment he could quit his work, he used to repair towards me ; he felt happy in seeing me, and if I was walking, he would join and follow me, as a dog follows his master. It may perhaps be said that this was merely the consequence of gratitude, and I cannot indeed prove that it was not so ; but as for myself, who carefully observed the circumstances, I am well convinced that it was a different feeling, and an effect of that affinity which Magnetism had established between us. A fortnight after I had ceased to magnetise him, he continued to testify a grateful sentiment, but no longer experienced that vehement desire to see me.

It will easily be conceived that serious inconveniences may arise from this disposition mutually kind, and constant wish to be

near each other, when those sentiments, though springing from a faultless and uncontaminated source, exist between two persons of different sexes; and that it will always be prudent not to expose ourselves to such hazards. I ought however to state, as a last observation on this head, that I have very often employed Magnetism successfully, without perceiving any effects of this description.

Let us now consider the dangers of Magnetism, when applied to the cure of diseases.

These dangers may arise,—first, from the agent itself,—and secondly, from the unskilfulness, the imprudence, or the enthusiasm of a magnetiser.

Magnetism is a very powerful agent; and sometimes its energy is directed upon the nervous system. Mesmer considered this effect as a crisis which was always salutary. This may be; but I confess that it is not sufficiently proved, in my opinion, to induce me to venture upon a continuance of magnetical treatment when I find that it commences by inflicting injury. Whenever any pain is produced by magnetical action, in the very seat of the disorder, I am never alarmed; because a pain of this kind announces only that an operation of nature is taking place, such as probably is necessary to accomplish the cure; but I dread all nervous concussions, and when they occur, I endeavour to calm the patients by gradually diminishing, and finally discontinuing my action. I am aware that many magnetisers are likely to tax me with timidity; yet I cannot recommend to others the adoption of any method of proceeding which I would consider as rashness in myself.

Under some circumstances, the magnetical action, applied to patients who were very ill, has appeared to produce accidents which had better be avoided. If it operates as a sedative, it is also tonical; and there may exist particular cases in which the patient requires to be reduced, instead of his vital powers being invigorated.

I have often heard it said that, *if Magnetism does no good,*

it will do no harm. This is not exactly true; for we are informed by somnambulists, that Magnetism, like every other remedy, should not be administered to excess, and that when it produces very decided effects, those effects should not be too intensely increased.

It is, however, easy to avoid all danger of this description. When Magnetism does injury, it immediately becomes obvious; and the moment there is reason to be alarmed, we need only discontinue its action. It is not with Magnetism as with other remedies; any given dose of it is not applied at once, but gradually, and there always remains the resource of suspending it, before its inconveniences can be manifested to any material extent.

I have already treated of its application to diseases, and have discriminated the particular complaints in which it appeared to me most proper to be used. We have now to consider the dangers which can arise, either from unskilfulness, imprudence, or enthusiasm, on the part of the magnetiser.

If you magnetise otherwise than it should be; if, instead of contemplating a cure, your object is only to make experiments; if you fail in the requisite assiduity to the treatment you have undertaken; if you expose your patients to the idle curiosity of strangers; if you interrupt a crisis which has commenced to announce itself; if you awake your patient abruptly and without caution, from a state of magnetical sleep; if you obstinately persist in employing processes which do not agree with him; if you are yourself in a bad state of health, or agitated by any strong passion, at the time of operating,—you may not only fatigue the patient, but even do him much injury. But if, on the contrary, you strictly adhere to the line of conduct which I have laid down, the inconveniences I have mentioned will be avoided, and you may rest assured that none of them will take place.

It is highly imprudent to commence a treatment, when there is not a determined resolution to persevere in it. The magne-

tical action sometimes produces, in the first instance, a crisis which deranges the established course of circulation, and appears to cause a certain degree of perturbation in the animal economy ; the consequences of this perturbation, which in themselves tend to accomplish the cure, may become more or less serious, if the action upon the patient be not sustained until that crisis naturally terminates.

Magnetisers who are alarmed at any slight crisis, and who, on such occasions, resort to other means than Magnetism itself ; those who doubt their own power while they are acting, or who hesitate in their processes, may also produce great injury.

Enthusiasm, on the other hand, may precipitate us into a contrary excess, which it is no less essential to guard against ; namely, that of announcing, as a matter of certainty, the cure of a patient, because we appear to have procured him some relief at first,—and thus induce him to relinquish the use of other medical remedies. I would particularly caution young magnetisers with respect to this danger. They may sometimes succeed, but their expectations may also be deceived ; and then, what regret will they not feel at having abandoned the usual course of medical practice, to which they will be compelled again to recur ! I admit, as possible, that the Faculty might not have been more successful ; but we should proceed in such a manner as to escape all self-reproach. In very serious cases, we ought not therefore to apply Magnetism without the concurrence of the physician ; but in chronical disorders, where no inconvenience can result from suspending medical remedies during a few days, we may then try what Magnetism can do, if the patient desires it. I have already made this observation, but cannot be too urgent respecting it.

In the domestic circle, Magnetism may be attended with inconveniences arising from particular relations antecedently established between the individuals : thus I have seen masters who caused themselves to be magnetised by their servants. Such a proceeding is practicable, only, where the servant entertains an

unquestionable attachment for his master, and possesses his entire confidence. Yet a mistress may magnetise her female servant, and a master his man, in cases where the one or the other servant have any real cause of complaint, and provided they are persuaded that the motive is no other than a desire to cure them.

A patient should not be acted upon by several magnetisers, as the action of two different persons may sometimes bear no analogy, and the second magnetiser may in that case do more harm than good. When we find ourselves compelled to employ a substitute, we should begin by establishing an affinity with him, and then adopt those precautions which I have already suggested. For the same reason, where there are numerous patients treated together, the subordinate magnetisers ought to consider themselves only as the assistants and instruments of the chief one.

Magnetism, when applied in a counter-direction, may occasion convulsion-fits; as, for example, in conducting the fluid from the lower to the upper extremities, or in any other manner which perverts its action and natural course. I have seen such attempts made, either out of curiosity or for amusement; but I must give warning that fatal consequences might possibly result from so doing, and that a magnetiser ought never to indulge in experiments for the purpose of amusing a company (¹⁰⁵).

Magnetism sometimes imparts extraordinary strength; but we should never suffer a patient to abuse it, as people might be inclined to do, for the sake of proving that remarkable effects have been produced.

I have often seen Magnetism prove injurious in tempestuous weather,—when the atmosphere was charged with electrical matter; and have already observed that we should avoid to magnetise at such times. From various experiments, I am inclined to believe that electricity is injurious to those in whom Magnetism has produced an increase of natural sensibility.

When it is perceived that Magnetism begins to produce an action, we are sometimes tempted to make efforts in order to augment the effects; on the contrary, we should continue sedately, for otherwise we might be exposed to counteract those peaceable operations of nature which it best understands.

Magnetism is attended with further dangers, when Somnambulism has been produced. An imprudent or enthusiastic magnetiser may elate the minds of his somnambulists, unto a pitch of delirium; he may disorganize them, by exacting too much from their appropriate faculties, and making them objects of curiosity,—by having a blind confidence in their predictions, their visions, their counsels, and by causing them incautiously to touch other patients, &c. But I have said enough upon this subject, in discussing that of Somnambulism.

Finally, another danger of Magnetism, consists in precipitating into exaggerated or extravagant systems those who behold marvellous effects,—of leading them to attempt the explanation of phenomena which are wholly inexplicable,—and of persuading them into a belief of what is opposed to common sense. The principles which I have held out may secure us from this danger; but I much fear that sceptics will say I have not escaped it myself.

I have disguised none of the inconveniences which can attend the practice of Magnetism; they who have attributed any others to it, either had no accurate notions upon the subject, or have formed their judgement from delusive appearances. Thus, it has been pretended that the circumstances of Somnambulism might lead to a neglect of decorum, which is absolutely false: no thought, contrary to the strictest rules of propriety, can ever arise in the mind of a person in that state. But the somnambulist, precisely because he entertains no reprehensible desire, or idea, is less attentive in preserving the customary forms of social intercourse; and if he should forget them, it is the magnetiser's duty to bring them again to his recollection. I have, for example, heard somnambulists fami-

liarly *thou* their magnetiser (¹⁰⁶); and, as this conduct rather offended my ideas of propriety, I ought to mention what is the cause of it, and how it may be avoided. The somnambulist beholds, in the person by whom he is magnetised, only one who takes a great concern in his well-being, and not a man whom social distinctions may happen to have rendered superior to himself; and in his answers, he adopts the same forms of expression as have been employed by the latter in addressing him, but he never originates them himself; hence it follows, that we should not address a somnambulist by the word *thou*, unless he happens to be a friend with whom we were previously upon such terms of mutual familiarity as to allow it.

It has been apprehended that the revelations of Somnambulism might become occasions of committing numerous indiscretions; which is impossible. The somnambulist is thoroughly enlightened with regard to his own duties and interests, and he neither will do nor say any thing contrary to them: if he exhibits a higher degree of confidence in his magnetiser, than he would perhaps have done in a waking state, it is because his intuitive sagacity gives him an absolute certainty that his confidence is not misplaced.

CHAPTER X.

Of a few singular facts which have fallen under my observation.

I HAVE followed the practice of Magnetism for five and twenty years; I have had the good fortune to cure many patients; I have had somnambulists of my own, and opportunities of making observations upon others, at the houses of several of my friends, where I co-operated in their treatment of the sick. Consequently, I could relate a great variety of facts which I have witnessed and ascertained with rigid accuracy,—of which I made memorandums at the time, and respecting which I have all possible certainty of not having been led into error; but I think it would be useless to promulgate anew similar accounts to those which have already been given to the public, for they who are uninformed on the subject of Magnetism would pay no attention to them, and they who are conversant with it do not require any additional proofs. I shall therefore confine myself, on the present occasion, to the narration of some facts which have been attended with circumstances that appeared to me rather unusual, and which may impart some new light upon this general matter; and, in the first place, it may not be improper for me to relate how I became a convert to the doctrine of Magnetism.

When I first read, in the year 1785, of the cures performed at Busancy, I considered the whole as an extravagant conceit: I even suspected that the intention, in relating prodigies which seemed revolting to common sense, could have been only to turn the partisans of Magnetism into ridicule. The perusal of such books, therefore, only tended to dissipate that curiosity which the relation of the cures effected by Mesmer had excited in me at an earlier period.

I was then in the country, near Sistéron, and usually passed the autumn with a friend who resided at Aix during the remainder of the year. I had been informed that this friend, a man possessing a cool judgment and enlightened mind, was gone to see Mesmer at M. Servant's; and that, upon his return to Aix, he had attempted Magnetism, and had a somnambulist. I resolved therefore to call upon him, in order to ascertain the truth; I performed the journey on foot, botanizing all the way, and arrived at Aix on the second day, about noon, having walked from four o'clock in the morning. On entering the house of my friend, I made him acquainted with the motive of my visit, and entreated him to inform me of what should be thought respecting those prodigies which had been related to me; upon which he smiled, and coolly replied, "*Stay, and you will see what it is,—the patient is to be here at three o'clock.*" At that hour, accordingly, the patient arrived, together with some other persons who were to form the chain. I placed myself also in that chain, and in a few minutes saw the patient fall asleep. I was contemplating this scene with some astonishment, when, in less than a quarter of an hour, I fell into the same state myself. It appears that, during my sleep, I spoke a great deal and was so much agitated as to disturb the chain: this I was told of after I awoke, when I saw every person present full of good humour on my account; for I had not myself any recollection of what then happened to me. The next day, as I did not fall asleep, I could make my own observations upon the state of Somnambulism; and I entreated my friend to instruct me in the processes of Magnetism.

After my return, I attempted Magnetism upon a few diseased persons who inhabited the hamlets in the neighbourhood of my country house. I was particularly attentive in avoiding to make any impression upon their imagination; I touched them under various pretences,—such as that slight frictions would be beneficial to them, &c.; and thus obtained some curious and salutary results, which fortified my belief.

Towards the close of autumn, I went to town and applied to a physician, who was a man of great merit and of superior understanding; possessing a prudent disposition to doubt, but desirous however to settle his opinion in consequence of experiments. I solicited him to point out to me some person whose health was sufficiently disordered, that the proof would be conclusive in favour of Magnetism, in case of a cure being obtained by that means;—I wished, at the same time, that the condition of the patient were not so very desperate as to cause any apprehension of his dying during the magnetical treatment. He conducted me to the house of a woman who had been ill for seven years. This woman habitually suffered the most excruciating pains; she was extremely swollen, and had a considerable obstruction in the spleen, which was visible externally;—she could neither walk nor lie down. I produced, in her, crises of perspiration and of urine; the blood resumed its natural course, the swelling and obstruction disappeared, and I enabled her to go out and attend to her concerns; when I touched her, she fell into magnetical sleep, but without becoming a somnambulist. She noticed, as issuing from myself, an odour which she compared to that of iron. It was at her house that I formed that chain, on the occasion of which the attention of the parties composing it was fixed by the means I have described in the fourth chapter (¹⁰⁷).

Soon after this event, M. D***, my intimate friend, magnetised a young lady about sixteen years of age, and belonging to one of the most respectable families in the country. That young lady became a somnambulist; I assisted at the treatment, in the course of which she dictated to us medical consultations, in behalf of several other patients, together with various principles relative to the cure of diseases. It was myself who put the questions to her, which were of such a nature as she could not anticipate, and I also wrote down her answers. I have never known a more perfect somnambulist. She exhibited the greater part of the phenomena observed by the Marquis de

Puységur, by M. Tardy, and by the members of the Strasburgh Society. Among those phenomena, there are some which I can neither account for to my satisfaction, nor well comprehend: I merely affirm my having witnessed them; and that, in consequence of their details, it is utterly impossible for me to admit that there could have been the slightest illusion on my part, nor on her own any idea of deceiving me,—nay, even any possibility of practising deception in those particulars to which I allude. I have still in my possession the original notes, which I took down on that occasion; but I do not introduce any extracts from them, because the phenomena are similar to those which have been mentioned elsewhere, and it is sufficient to state thus much: if transcribed here, they would add nothing to the proofs already existing.

Some time after, I magnetised one of my friends, who was a young man about twenty-two years of age, and who had been unwell for several days past. His confidence in Magnetism was very defective, and he considered the state of Somnambulism as a sort of delirium, of which he was unwilling to exhibit an instance. I mention him, because he presented two or three phenomena which may afford some new information.

I was alone with him, at six o'clock, one evening in September. Scarcely had I touched him, when he fell into a sort of sleep which had some resemblance with the state of a cataleptic: his arms and fingers remained in whatever position I placed them; he merely retained the faculty of a slight movement with the head. I put several questions to him, but he answered none; only, when I asked him whether he wished to be awakened, he made a sign of the head to signify his answer in a negative sense. It was not until eleven o'clock that he manifested a consent to be restored to his natural state;—when he awoke, he could not believe it to be any later than seven o'clock, and his astonishment was very great upon being informed how long he had slept. I had much difficulty in obtaining that he would again submit to be magnetised, to which

at length he consented : the same phenomena were daily renewed for a whole week, only the sleeping state was of shorter duration.

It was on the sixth day of my magnetising this young man, when M. ***, a pupil of Mesmer's, came to Sistéron ; and it will easily be supposed that I hastened to mention the case of my somnambulist to him. M. *** was an enthusiast, who pretended to have performed prodigious things ; he possessed a very ardent faith, but then I scarcely know what he did not believe. This gentleman told me that, if my somnambulist did not speak, it was only because I knew not how to *will* it. His words were : “ Exert your volition to the effect that this patient should speak ;—order him to do so, and he will obey.”

I proposed to M. *** that he should come and see this somnambulist, and appointed for that purpose an hour at which I knew that the latter would be in his crisis. He accordingly came, sat down about two paces from me, and fixed his eyes steadfastly upon my somnambulist, without uttering a single word, while I continued to magnetise. A few moments after, he drew from his pocket a small steel rod, desiring me to present it to the somnambulist ; I accordingly presented it to the stomach of the latter, who was instantly seized with a convulsive shivering, which alarmed me the more as he had not before performed any motion : I returned the rod to M. ***, who withdrew, and my somnambulist meanwhile continued to be silent.

On the following day, I cast him into his usual crisis. He at first preserved the same immobility ; but an hour afterwards, he stretched out his arms and legs, and rubbed his eyes, like a person who is waking. I thought indeed that he was doing so, but I was mistaken : his eyes remained closed, and after a deep sigh he exclaimed,—“ *Good God ! what an injury this fluid has done, which came to me yesterday ! He would have me to speak, and so I do.*” I enquired what harm had been done to him ; to which he replied, that his condition required him to

remain speechless a few days longer, in order to combine his ideas;—that he would then have become a very good somnambulist, but that nature's operation having been interrupted, he now could never attain to any great degree of perspicacity. I desired him to resume the state in which he was before, and to preserve silence as long as he might judge it necessary; to which he answered that this was impossible, and added (which however extraordinary it may be is not the less true),—“ *When this fluid entered, I was occupied about the remedies;—I was then thinking of senna;—I had already thought about manna, cassia, rhubarb, &c.**”.

“ But,” said I, “ as it was injurious to you, why have you consented to speak ? ”—“ *It was because I could not resist that fluid.* ”—“ But it was not he who magnetised you, and I did not force you to speak. ”—“ *No, but you did not oppose his will. That fluid exerts a very powerful volition; I would not be magnetised by him, and should be apprehensive of his rendering me insane.* ” (In fact, the somnambulists of M. *** were accustomed to see very extraordinary things).—“ But, have I not as powerful a volition ? ”—“ *Yes, but it is calm, and tends only to my cure.* ”—During this conversation M. *** knocked at my door: the somnambulist did not know that it was him, but had a sensation of his proximity, and manifested uneasiness on that account; from which it may be supposed that I did not then admit the visitor.

My somnambulist, however, became sufficiently perspicacious; and he described to me, with very great precision, his complaints, their cause and the remedy for them. He forewarned me that if he were ever informed, in his waking state, of having spoken during sleep, he would not then consent to be magnetised any more; notwithstanding which I was so unguarded, some time afterwards, as to suffer him to be seen in

* There are some very singular expressions in this language of the somnambulist; and I retain them merely for the sake of accuracy, though I cannot precisely imagine why they were employed.

the somnambulic state, by a person from whom some hints escaped relatively to what had passed ; and from that moment, I could never prevail upon him to submit again to my operations. But, before that interruption took place, he exhibited some very curious phenomena.

He possessed the utmost degree of sensibility, with some disposition to melancholy, and was of a calm and placid temper. He had spent two years in the Island of Candia. One day, when in his usual crisis, I happened to say something to him respecting that country : he told me he had forgotten its language, but that, if any person acquainted with it were actually present, he should be able to remember it and would willingly converse in that language. I had not then any opportunity of verifying his assertion, but I asked him whether he recollected any books which he had read, and he replied that he remembered those by which he had been most affected ;—that, being at Candia, he had read a very melancholy work, which made a strong impression upon his mind. To my enquiry what book that was, he answered that he did not know the title. I then asked him if he could repeat any part of it.—“ *As much as you please,*” said he ; and he immediately recited the whole passage from *Young’s Night Thoughts*, relating to Narcissa, precisely as if he had been reading it out of the book. I am certain that, when awake, he did not know by heart the *Night Thoughts* of Young. I even believe that no one has yet retained them in French prose ; and besides, he made of literature an amusement only.

I mention this fact as a very remarkable one, because it proves that, in the state of Somnambulism, those sensations with which we have been affected when awake, revive in our minds with all their original freshness. My somnambulist re-read, as it were, the story of Narcissa. On the following day, I ascertained that he had recited two full pages ; from which I do not believe that he varied in a single word. It is evident that many of the

phenomena, exhibited by somnambulists, are to be explained in the same manner as that which I have just related.

Another day, we went together into the country, where we remained till six o'clock in the evening. Upon our return, at half-past six, which was nearly the usual hour of his being magnetised, we were distant about three miles from the town, when he told me that he found himself overcome with sleep. I ought to have dissipated that disposition by every means in my power, but at that period could not resist the temptation of making experiments; I therefore stopped him,—placed my hand upon his eyes, for about a minute, and with an exertion of volition, said: “*Sleep and walk.*” Instantly his eyes closed, he sighed, and proceeded on the road.

We had a long way to walk, and the path was very rugged: sometimes he would say, “*I am much fatigued; have we yet far to go?*” I proposed that we should rest a little; he then seated himself down upon a stone and observed, in a complaining voice, “*This chair is very cold.*” We met several persons, and he remarked on those occasions, “*There is a fluid passing by* (108).” When we reached home, I awoke him, and during the two following days he found himself much indisposed in consequence of fatigue. The phenomena which that patient subsequently presented, were in no respect different from those which are to be found in other accounts published.

The following is a fact of another description; and I relate it because it exhibits a few circumstances likely to prove interesting, under a metaphysical point of view.

I was in the province of Artois, at a country place situated about half a league from the small town called Pernes. The wife of a notary, residing in that town, had been two years afflicted with a palsy (*hemiplegia*), which affected her right side, so much that no part of it was capable of motion; she could not move her right hand from one place to another, without taking hold of it with her left. She could still notice all that was passing about her, and duly exercise her judgment upon it;

but had lost the faculty of reading, of enumerating, and of speaking the language, as it was spoken by others: the latter circumstance did not arise from any impediment in the organs of speech, and the phenomenon therefore was the more singular.

In speaking, she absolutely employed only the infinitive of verbs, and never made use of any pronoun. (I believe that the language of several savage nations is also destitute of similar modifications.) Thus she would say very distinctly,—“ *Wish good morning,*”—“ *Stop, husband come;*” instead of saying, “ *I wish you a good morning,*”—“ *Stop, my husband is coming;*” but she employed no conjugation whatever. With respect to the faculty of enumerating, she could go as far as *three*, and no further than *four*, even with assistance. Thus, when three pieces of money were presented to her, she counted very well, *one, two, three*; but if a fourth piece was put before her, she always would say, “ *Know not.*” If the word *four* was then pronounced, in order to assist her memory, she would repeat, *one, two, three, four*; but if a fifth piece were added, it was in vain to express the word *five*, as she would persist in answering, “ *Know not.*”

I undertook to magnetise her. On the first day, she experienced a sensation of heat, and prickings in the arms; a few days after, she had power to move her fingers, and at the expiration of a fortnight had recovered the use of her arm; which event was a matter of general conversation throughout the town.—By degrees, she attained anew the faculty of enumeration; in which she daily improved so far that, when I left her, she could proceed to the extent of *forty*: she also resumed her capacity of reading; but had it all to learn over again, and at first was under a necessity of spelling the words. She said to me, “ *Formerly, could not say—I,—you,—thou,—he; now, say well.*” From that phrase, it was obvious that she had not yet regained the habit of employing pronouns, but that she understood their meaning. I used to make her repeat, “ *I wish you a good morning;*” but in the first instance, she would have answered, “ *Know not.*”

It was in this stage of her magnetical treatment that I relinquished it, committing to her husband the care of completing her cure; but the events of the revolution having interrupted my correspondence with that family, I am still uninformed whether it has been finally accomplished. However, such a connexion between the intellect and the use of language appeared to me worthy of observation.

I once magnetised a physician, who, in the state of Somnambulism, could attain to clear and distinct perceptions only when I held his head within my hands; on which occasion he told me that, if he were magnetised too powerfully and without any precaution, it might occasion an obstruction in the brain; which shews that Magnetism may be attended with inconveniences.

I have seen a woman afflicted with the dropsy, and who had repeatedly undergone the operation of *paracentesis* (commonly called *tapping*), cast into Somnambulism; in which state she presented her hands before the magnetiser, as if before a stove. By that means, she became impregnated with the fluid; after which, she magnetised herself, by passing her hands over her whole body, from head to foot, and with great dexterity.

In the same place, there was another female somnambulist, of very limited understanding, and extremely devout, who was subject to Epileptic fits. In her magnetical crises, she thought that she saw angels alight upon every thing which the magnetiser touched. I was curious to discover what these angels were. One day that the magnetiser was absent, and had allowed me to act as his substitute, she saw angels as before; but these were less beautiful, or less brilliant than the others. I ascertained that these angels were nothing more than the luminous appearance of the fluid, which, emanating from myself, was not so brilliant as that which issued from the other magnetiser.

I obtained the radical cure of a dropsical woman, who, before being afflicted with this disorder, had experienced some slight sensations of pain in the abdominal region. One day that

I was magnetising her, which was two months after the dropsy had been removed, she told me that whenever I presented my hand towards the abdomen, though at some distance, and then performed any motion with that hand, it seemed to her as if the motion were repeated within her body. This woman was a servant; and her master and mistress, who were near her at that time, held each of them one hand upon her and the other upon myself. I was proceeding to magnetise them also, as they had been somewhat complaining; and as I passed my hand several times before the one and the other, my principal patient said to me (using the words which I now repeat), "*This is very strange:—when you pass your hand before my mistress, I feel it move within my body in the same manner as when you pass it before me.*"—"But," said I, "do you not experience the same sensation when I pass my hand before your master?"—"No," she replied: "*when you pass your hand before him, I do not feel any thing.*" This fact appeared to me very remarkable; and I clearly understand, that the woman to whom I allude felt that peculiar sensation in consequence only of the conformity of internal organs, between two individuals of the same sex.

The treatment of a girl of sixteen years of age, who had suffered intense pains for above three months, in consequence of which she was unable to walk, exhibited a circumstance which is worthy of being mentioned. The effect of magnetical action displayed itself on the third day, by a diminution of the pain, as well as by a return of natural sleep; and she was cured in the course of one month. But, although a chain composed of twelve persons was calculated to render the action very energetic, she did not experience the slightest sensation from it, nor did she even feel the heat of my hand when it was passed before her face. During this treatment, a small pimple appeared upon the patient's eye-lid: I directed my thumb towards her eye, with the intention to disperse that pimple; upon my doing which, she felt so strong a heat in the eye, as to cause her to exclaim, "*You burn me!*" From which it is to be observed, that the

same person may experience remarkable sensations, or may have no perception at all of the magnetical action, according to the nature of the disease with which such person is affected, but yet may be equally cured in both cases; and we have also to observe, that this sensibility to the magnetical action may be manifested in case of a slight indisposition only, while it would perhaps remain inert in another case of very serious disease.

A gentleman of my acquaintance, possessed of great information and an accurate observer, had been for some time subject to the head-ache, which always took place when he surrendered himself too ardently to his studies; on one of those occasions, he was induced to try whether Magnetism could produce any effect upon him, and accordingly was magnetised by his brother, whom he requested to concentrate the action upon the head, in order to produce, if possible, a state of sleep. The head-ache was removed, but without his experiencing the slightest drowsiness; at the end of eight or ten days, however, he was much surprised to find he had acquired a very singular faculty, that of perceiving, in darkness, objects of a white colour, when his eyes were open, and of perceiving the same during the day when his eyes were shut. As this phenomenon indicated, in the organ of sight, a degree of irritability which it might perhaps be dangerous to increase, he did not deem it prudent to extend the experiment. At the expiration of a month, he still retained the same faculty; and I consulted upon this subject a somnambulist, who informed me that it arose from an accumulation of fluid in the brain, and that it would be proper for the person whom I mentioned to be magnetised *in full stream*, in order to restore the equilibrium.

I have lately witnessed a very interesting conversation between two somnambulists, who were mutually unknown, and who consulted each other upon their respective disorders. If both had been very perspicacious, they would of course have perfectly agreed: this however did not take place. Each of them noticed some part of the other's malady, but without

observing the whole ; which produced a material difference in the treatment required. A third somnambulist, who was introduced to one of the first, accurately perceived which was the organ affected in that individual ; but gave, as to the injury which that organ had sustained, such details as proved that he did not notice distinctly the nature of the disease. I have no doubt that each of the somnambulists had a very clear perception of his own condition, but it was demonstrated they did not notice, with the same degree of precision, the condition of those with whom they were placed in affinity ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ ; whence it follows that, although very useful indications are to be obtained from somnambulists, it is the height of imprudence to rely upon them for remedies, without submitting their prescriptions to the judgment of a medical practitioner.

I shall conclude this chapter by relating a fact which recently fell under my observation ; and my motive for so doing is, because this fact tends to refute, by a direct experiment, errors into which some enthusiastic magnetisers have been betrayed, though they were strongly condemned by the principles of sound philosophy. *

Madame de ****, the mother of two children who were the exclusive objects of her solicitude, having been unwell for several days, her husband attempted to magnetise her ; and at the first trial, she was cast into Somnambulism. In that state, she announced the crises which were to take place, and the issue of her complaint, giving at the same time some useful instructions relative to one of her children who was also indisposed. Her husband, delighted with her sagacity and the facility with which she expressed herself, encouraged her to take up a variety of subjects ; and, after her cure was accomplished, he continued her a somnambulist, from motives of mere curiosity. Her imagination soon became exalted, and she saw the most extraordinary things : she would describe to him a place where important family papers were concealed, saying that these papers had been deposited there during the time of public troubles, by one of

her relations dead many years ago, but who actually appeared to her, and communicated every possible intelligence for their discovery. The visions of that lady being prolonged for the space of three months, without her retaining the slightest recollection of them when awake, and every thing she said being according to all appearances very consistent, her husband, who noticed in all this nothing else than a phenomenon incomprehensible to himself, determined to verify the facts, that he might positively ascertain what course he should adopt. He therefore went to the spot which had been pointed out to him; and not only was undeceived, with respect to the papers announced, but he also ascertained that the place itself bore no resemblance to the description given of it, and that there was not even a shadow of truth in the visions of his wife.

I am persuaded that if the same precautions were taken, to verify all the phenomena which have apparently a supernatural character, similar results would be obtained, and that experience would confirm all which sound philosophical knowledge had previously established.

It may be proper to add, that a prudent and perspicacious somnambulist having been placed in communication with Madame de ****, he positively declared that every thing which that lady's imagination suggested on those occasions was delusive; that by occupying her mind with such fantastical notions, a dangerous concussion was excited in the brain, which might terminate in some nervous disease, and that it was adviseable to discontinue the practice of casting her into somnambulatory crises. It is probable that this perturbation of the brain would not have taken place, if Madame de ****'s attention, during her Somnambulism, had been directed to no other objects than those in which her health was concerned; in which case, her disposition to that state would have ceased immediately after the cure was effected.

This phenomenon, of a series of visions perfectly concatenated, well deserves the attention of physiologists and metaphysicians.

It is sometimes manifested spontaneously ; and in my belief, a striking example of it may be adduced in the celebrated Swedenborg, who, during seven and twenty years, travelled in the ethereal regions, and has given to the world a full account of every thing he saw there. The mental state of Swedenborg was similar to that of the visionary somnambulists of whom I have just cited an example ; with this only difference, that in the latter it is not a permanent state, and that it presents a striking contrast with the state of waking⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

Finally, it is but with the greatest caution that experiments can be made upon the faculties of somnambulists, because it is always dangerous to excite the irritability of the brain.

The visions of the lady, to whom I alluded in the above, suddenly ceased in consequence of a circumstance which proves the empire of a magnetiser's mind, over the ideas of his somnambulist.

One of my friends, a man endowed with great magnetical powers, having been requested by that lady's husband to come to her relief, he principally exerted his volition to the effect of dissipating the visions with which she was haunted. Being in a crisis which had already continued for an hour, she said to him, "*A singular revolution is produced in me ; it seems as if the fluid had penetrated all the folds of my brain.*" She afterwards experienced a tremulous motion, descending from the head to the feet ; and from that moment, the character of her somnambulic state underwent so complete an alteration, that she entirely lost the remembrance of those fantastical ideas which had possessed her during four months⁽¹¹¹⁾. After her ideas had been thus restored to their natural and proper course, her husband very prudently resolved never to magnetise her again, except when the state of her health required it, and then to do so with no other view but to her own benefit.

It appears that, when Madame **** spoke of the fluid penetrating the *folds of her brain*, she intended to select an expression qualified to convey, as exactly as possible, an idea of the

particular sensation which she experienced at that time. One day, being urged to occupy herself with her former visions, she replied: "When I think of them, it seems as if my brain were *unfolding itself*." I do not pretend to deduce any inference from this mode of expression; but it appears to me the more remarkable, as that lady had certainly never heard any mention made of Dr. Gall's theory.

A whole volume of observations could be added to those I have stated, but they would not differ materially from those which are already to be found in various works concerning Magnetism, and it may be sufficient for me to declare that they would only confirm the general substance of those works; I therefore do not enter into useless details.

No circumstance has ever fallen under my notice, which appeared to deviate from the natural order of physical matters, or to partake of a supernatural character. Every thing induces me to believe that both Mesmer and Tardy de Montravel have, very consistently, traced the sensations of somnambulists to a sort of *internal tact*, or something analagous to the instinct of animals, and ascribed the foreknowledge peculiar to that state to the rapid calculations of intellect (¹¹²).

CHAPTER XI.

Of Mystical doctrines, and their association with Magnetism.

AFTER having developed the principal phenomena of Somnambulism and the proofs which establish their reality, it remains to investigate an objection, which is the more important from its direct tendency to subvert, even without any discussion, the whole mass of those proofs, and from this objection having been urged by very enlightened men, to whom scientific studies imparted the greatest rectitude of mind, and who, being aware of the many paths which lead into error, labour in every possible manner to remove the numerous causes which might precipitate us into it.

When geometricians or dialecticians wish to establish a proposition, or the reality of any fact, they have two methods of proceeding, both of them equally rigorous; the one consists in a direct and positive demonstration, the other in proving the impossibility of the contrary.

Relatively to physical matters, when the observation of any fact involves a contradiction of the known laws of Nature, it is pronounced to be falsely made, without the trouble of repeating it. In the moral order of things, when a doctrine leads to dangerous consequences, it is sufficient to shew the implication of those consequences, to be justified in condemning it. Lastly, when a system is supported by persons who deviate from received notions, and yield to the fanciful products of imagination,—or when it leads to results evidently absurd, a reflecting man ought to reject it without examination; as this could only serve to confute such a system, and the confutation would be useless. We should not expect to bring back to the

path of truth, those who have wandered from that of reason, and who have discarded all logical principles.

Facts, true in themselves, may doubtless be employed to sustain an erroneous theory; and the fallacy of any attempted explanations does not authorize us to deny those facts, when attested by persons who nevertheless reject the explanations given of them. But, if it happens that such facts are attested by no other than those who adduce them in support of their system, then they should not be received without hesitation. The sincerity of the witnesses would prove nothing; for the moment a false idea has gained the ascendancy in our mind, we become disposed to admit any species of absurdity. The works composed in ages of darkness are filled with relations of prodigies and miracles;—they who indicted them had no intention to impose, and were as firmly persuaded of the follies which they related, as we are of the physical truths which experience has fully confirmed. Should we therefore discuss their testimonies?—Diogenes replied to a sophist, who denied the existence of motion, merely by walking in his presence, which implied that positive evidence dispenses with the use of dialectics; and now, if there be such sophisms, the artifice of which does not require to be disentangled, in order to ascertain that they do not prove what is professed to be proved, there are also such marvellous facts as it would be superfluous to investigate, because we are previously convinced that there can be no reality in them. The progress of an enquiring mind would be incessantly impeded, if he were to stop for the mere purpose of encountering every chimerical notion that fell in his way. Perhaps, even the dictates of wisdom forbid us to expose ourselves to the contagion of enthusiasts, as well as to the subtleties of sophists; thus, there should be no attempt to verify a fact too extraordinary in its kind, unless those who attest it are men of enlightened minds, and have always been known to possess rational good sense.

This is what philosophers have already stated, and in which

I am fully of their opinion; but it seems to me that, in certain cases and particularly with regard to the present subject, they have given too great an extent to the application of these principles. Let us first hear their objections, and we will afterwards discuss them.

They say: The facts you relate are connected with those mystical theories which constitute the delirium of human intellects; your *crisiacs* resemble those which have heretofore been seen in various enthusiastic sects, or which the present times exhibit in some religious assemblies; and their condition proceeds from a disease of the imagination, which is often convulsive, and almost always contagious.—The most marvellous phenomena of Somnambulism have been produced and attested by *illuminati* (¹¹³);—that is, by visionaries who have adduced them in proof of their theory, and by that means seduced many persons into their opinions.—The experience of such fatal consequences ought to guard us against the illusions which have produced them; and it is sufficient for us to be informed of their danger, for refusing our acknowledgment of those illusory facts, or to discuss the grounds on which they rest.—In magnetical treatments, as in the assemblies of different religious sectaries, *crisiacs* have been remarked to express themselves not only with enthusiasm, but even with a surprising degree of eloquence; yet all that is to be concluded from this, is that some particular cause had thrown them into a state of delirium: such a cause can never constitute the means of curing human diseases, and we ought the more to dread its interference, as it may eventually disorder the understanding.

This, if I am not deceived, is stating the objection with its full force. In order to ascertain whether it be well founded, we must analyze it in all its parts.

“*The phenomena of Somnambulism tend to prove extravagant theories, and are themselves explained by those theories.*”

No.—We should say that these phenomena have improperly been associated with all kind of opinions, by those who were al-

ready prepossessed with such opinions; in the same manner as physical facts, with respect to which every one is agreed, have been employed to maintain the most absurd systems, and explained by those systems themselves. It is known that Mesmer was impeached, by several of his antagonists, of adhering to the doctrine of materialism; the imputation was unjust,—but it is true that Mesmer did not perceive, in the magnetical action, any thing more than the combined influence of matter and motion, and that he never recurred to spiritual theories for explaining the phenomena which accompany the state of Somnambulism: this sufficiently proves their independence of any mystical doctrine whatsoever.

“ Somnambulists have uttered wild and extravagant things.”

I admit this with regard to many, as the state to which we allude renders susceptible of the slightest impressions those who are in it. If chimerical notions are excited in them,—if transported into a region of fanciful illusions, then their elevated imagination precipitates them into every species of visionary dreams; but somnambulists who are judiciously directed, or rather, who are not misled from their natural course, always display much good sense and sound reason.

The *crisiacs* who have been seen, in assemblies of the *illuminati*, cannot be compared with those who have always remained alone with their magnetiser, or at most, were accompanied only by a few relations or friends, and who have never been interrogated upon any other subject than their health. I trust I have sufficiently pointed out that the greater number of somnambulists are of the latter description; and I consent that confidence should not be granted to any others.

It is further said that the most astonishing somnambulists have been produced by *illuminati*, and that it is of them also that the most rapid and extraordinary cures are related. This may be the case, and I will explain the reason of it;—however, from the causes which I have already assigned, and from the information

I have collected, I am persuaded that somnambulism has rarely proved a salutary crisis in their hands.

All those who are conversant on the subject of Magnetism confess that its action depends upon volition, and that this faculty must be fortified by belief, by confidence, and by a benevolent motive ; or in other words, that the three qualities which impart energy to Magnetism are *Faith, Hope, and Charity*.

Now, in those who are described as *illuminati*, volition is the more calm and energetic, from its being unobstructed by doubt, and because its action is not in the least perverted by any desire of becoming conspicuous. Their faith is the more solid and intense, in consequence of their persuasion that the world of spirits is one of realities ; while the physical world, in their opinion, exhibits nothing more than delusive appearances. Their confidence is the more unshaken from being constantly fortified by prayer, and from their implicit reliance upon the assistance of God, when they have ascertained the purity of their own intentions. Their charity is the more ardent, because of their persuasion that, to do good, is fulfilling their proper and only office upon earth, thereby rendering themselves worthy of Almighty grace.

Thus, and although they may be guided by an erroneous opinion, the power which they derive from it is not less real and operative ; and we know that a prejudice, of whatever kind it may be, can produce the same energy, the same confidence, and the same ardour, as could originate in truth itself. I would incidentally observe, that the astonishing cures performed by anchorites, of various religions, are to be attributed to this union of volition, of belief and of confidence.

It results from these premises, that the phenomena depending on the state of Somnambulism prove nothing in favour of any mystical theory ; that they have been witnessed by persons who differed absolutely in their respective opinions ; and that they must be singly enquired into, without any reference to the character or notions of those who have attested them.

It is further urged and asserted, that the somnambulists directed by *illuminati* have supported the theory of their magnetisers,—have delivered predictions,—have pretended actually to see spirits,—as also to have travelled through another world, &c. &c. ; and that such absurdities prove those somnambulists to have been either impostors or madmen.

I reply, that imposture of this kind occurred much less frequently than is commonly believed, and especially than has been asserted. But nothing is so generally diffused, as error and illusion. If it were required to prove the reality of somnambulatory visions, no doubt it would then be necessary to combine every circumstance, and a few palpable errors would justify a rejection of the whole ; but the question is reduced to ascertain whether there does not exist a state different from the ordinary state of man, and which sometimes is spontaneously manifested in the crises of certain diseases, as well as frequently reproduced by magnetical action ; and it does not in the least affect the reality of this phenomenon whether the imagination of those who have entered into that state may have deviated and wandered, or whether it be otherwise. With respect to the visions and discourses of a few *crisiacs*, all observers are agreed that the imagination of somnambulists is liable to be elevated, and that, when magnetisers have imprudently produced this exaltation, there is nothing however wild or extravagant which the somnambulists are not capable of uttering : they then become delirious patients, who relate their dreams with a fluent and vivid elocution.

Hence a belief in Magnetism is absolutely unconnected with any assent to the opinions of the *illuminati* ; and if many persons have supposed that the doctrine of Magnetism had a tendency to that occult and mystical philosophy, it is because they have not enquired into nor reflected upon the subject,—and because they have not discriminated the peculiar condition of somnambulists, which constitutes a real and positive fact, from certain conversations held by them and which are entitled to no confidence. I think, even, that the investigation of Som-

nambulism would lead to an explanation of the greater number of those facts upon which the *illuminati* establish their theory; and that, if it were accurately observed, it would restore to the natural and physical order of things a great variety of phenomena, which seemed to result from supernatural causes.

As the discussion in which I have indulged has occasioned me to speak of the *illuminati*, I shall endeavour to convey as exact and precise a notion of their doctrine, as can be done by one who is not initiated into their society. This digression may be interesting to my readers, and it will serve at least to prove that mystical theories are entirely distinct from the doctrine of Magnetism.

CHAPTER XII.

A digression upon mystical doctrines.

It is a remarkable fact, that we are generally better informed upon the various systems of religious philosophy devised by the ancients, than upon those of modern times. There is not a single point relating to the Egyptian, Greek, Indian, or Scandinavian theogonies, which has not been an object of profound and laborious research; every thing connected with the mysteries of Isis, Ceres, and Bacchus, has been discussed with infinite erudition, while we have neglected to investigate similar subjects when they belonged to recent times. The following seems to be the reason of this difference.

During the 17th century, matters of controversy chiefly occupied the minds of men. In the 18th, the progress of philosophical knowledge exposed the frivolity of such pursuits, and showed that the faculty of reasoning ought to be applied to

more useful objects. An essential service was doubtless thus conferred ; but it would have been worth while to have preserved the history of man's vain attempts, at the discovery of truths independent of those which the observation of external objects brought within his grasp. The reason why this has been done with regard to ancient systems, and not to modern ones, is because the latter rest upon ideas borrowed from christianity ; and because Voltaire, who exercised a great influence upon the intellectual character of his age, attacked with the powerful arm of ridicule a prevailing disposition to discussions concerning the dogmas of the Christian religion. Several writers have exposed the idle fancies of the Platonists and the Eclectics ;—Plotinus and Porphyry have had their commentators ; but, with regard to Jacob Behmen, Swedenborg and Saint Martin, we have contented ourselves with asserting that they laboured under mental derangement, without enquiring whether there may not be in their numerous works some ingenious hints, some tracts of an elevated morality, and above all a very remarkable concatenation of principles and consequences. I do not pretend that these writings ought to be thoroughly studied,—time might certainly be better employed ; I observe only, that they who undertake to narrate the history of human opinions are not justifiable, when they remain altogether silent respecting those which have had numerous adherents,—that, before we judge, we ought to understand them,—and that to expose a chimerical system, by shewing its falsehood, is preferable to rejecting it with a mere expression of contempt.

The disdain of what is connected with religious opinions has produced other grievous results. Several writers of much talent, struck with the numerous evils occasioned by superstition, have thought that they could not better employ themselves than to drain the source of those evils ; which motive has induced them to attack the christian religion in a violent manner ; but it is perceivable that they had not considered it

as a whole and in its true point of view. The Orthodox theologians, on one side, and the philosophers of the school of Diderot and Helvétius on the other, have addressed themselves to distinct classes of readers : they who attend to the writings of those who are favourable to one side of the question, never inspect the works which favour the other ; and in general, neither the philosophers, to whom I allude, become acquainted with the proofs upon which Pascal and Bossuet believed religion to be firmly established, nor do the divines take any pains to understand the objections of their antagonists ; the two parties pursue such opposite courses, that the shafts which they mutually direct against each other are lost in the intermediate space. It is not for me to pronounce between them, in a work which has a different object ; but I shall only observe that, when we propose to ourselves the investigation of any question, it would be better to commence by viewing it in its fullest extent.

When attempting to convey some idea of the doctrine of a class of men who, in consequence of their meditations and the revelations with which they imagine to have been favoured, have framed for themselves a sort of distinct religion, I have first to give notice that I do not adopt that doctrine, nor pretend to point it out as admissible in any shape ; and that my sole object is to ascertain, whether it involves greater absurdity than either of the metaphysical systems of Plato, Leibnitz, Huet, Malebranche, &c. ;—which, notwithstanding they are considered as destitute of probability, have never deprived their authors of what claims they otherwise possessed to public regard.

However, in order to developé this doctrine under the most favourable aspect, it is necessary that I should for the present discard my private opinion,—considering it, not as altogether false, but merely as problematical ; and next, that I should state the proofs upon which rest the persuasion of those who have adopted it. It will be necessary also for me to examine whether or not, by adopting the principles of this doctrine, we should be led to those results which are generally ascribed to it,—whether,

for example, the reality of foreknowledge and prophecies would be one of its undeniable consequences ; and lastly, what would be its influence upon the morals and conduct of mankind.

In order to avoid all equivocal or offensive denominations, I shall apply that of *Theosophists* * to those who profess this

* It is the more important to designate them by some particular denomination, as that of *illuminati* has been improperly applied to a very dangerous sect, diffused throughout Germany, and whose principles tend to nothing less than the subversion of social order. In this sect were mingled enthusiasts, dupes, and madmen ; but as the extravagant fancies of such people might be attended with fatal consequences, it became the duty of public magistrates to check their propagation.

A writer whose intrepidity, motives and talents I duly appreciate, has confounded under the general appellation of *illuminati* all those who have adopted or appeared to adopt mystical notions ; he has comprehended in one general proscription the ancient heresiarch Manichæus, Swedenborg, Kant, Saint-Martin, Weishaupt, together with the frenetics of the French revolution. His imagination perceived, in the doctrine of the Theosophists, the source from which was derived that of the Jacobins, and he ventured to assert that their religious opinions were only a veil intended to disguise a plan for undermining the throne, the altar, and the very foundations of civil society. The parallel which he institutes, between men the most opposite to each other in character and principles, sometimes excites our astonishment. This writer might have rendered himself more useful, and have secured the approbation of all wise men, if, abstaining from every exaggeration, he had limited himself to remark on the subject,—that mystical doctrines having obtained numerous abettors in the North of Europe, towards the end of the last century, they were employed as a medium for insinuating other notions ;—that the authors of these doctrines, wholly absorbed in solitary meditations, never suspected that their language would become employed in support of opinions contrary to those which they themselves professed, and that the most revolting inferences would be deduced from their own principles, and wishes tending only to universal good ;—that, by strained interpretations of scripture, those doctrines corrupted the real spirit of christianity ;—that the christian religion, embraced in its original simplicity, is sufficient to direct men in their conduct, and to comfort them under their afflictions ;—that being revealed for all, it is made clear to all, and that nothing is gained by adding new mysteries to it ;—lastly, that it is dangerous to excite enthusiasm, because those who are once tainted with it

doctrine ; as they, who believe it true, give that denomination to the masters whose disciples they consider themselves, and to the writers whose works appear to contain an acknowledgment of its principles.

The question relative to the truth of mystical doctrines is extremely complicated, or rather it involves a multitude of different questions.

Among these, there are some whose negative would effectually overturn the system, while the affirmative would not prove any thing favourable to the other questions. There are some, also, which are perfectly insulated, and of which the affirmative or the negative might equally be maintained, without any influence upon the system viewed as a whole.

Let us consider a few of these questions.

First. Does there exist a God, by whom we have been created ?—*Second.* Does there exist, in us, any substance distinct from matter, and which constitutes the sentient and thinking principle ?—*Third.* Does this substance survive the body ?—*Fourth.* Although this substance employs the corporeal organs, and receives sensations from them, is it competent, in certain cases, to feel and to think without the aid of these organs ?

Here are four questions intimately connected with each other. They who deny the three first, may dispense with all discussion respecting the fourth. It would be superfluous to prove them here ; the existence of God, the soul's immateriality and immortality having been the subject of a vast number of philosophical works*.

no longer see things in their true colour, and may be precipitated into every species of error. With regard however to what this author says, concerning the danger of secret societies, I am entirely of his opinion.

* Among the physical proofs of the existence of a Deity, is one which I think has not been attended to ; and I beg leave to make a brief exposal of it.

They who do not acknowledge that an intelligent cause has created or regulated the world, must concede one of the two following suppositions : either, that

The reply to the fourth question is deduced from the two preceding ones; for if it be admitted that the soul is incor-

man has existed upon earth from all eternity, or that his existence there has commenced at some period more or less distant. Let us examine these hypotheses.

All those who, during a century past, have studied natural history and geology, are now agreed that the earth was formerly in a soft and ductile state;—that it was covered by the waters, and that the minerals upon its surface have been crystallized in a fluid. Indications of crystallization appear even in the primitive rocks; and with regard to secondary rocks, the fact is evident, for they contain an innumerable quantity of organized bodies.

Now, in this soft and yielding state, the earth could not have been adapted for the habitation of man; and it may further be observed, that no fossil human bone has ever been discovered in any part of the globe. This, indeed, does not rigorously demonstrate—though it concurs to prove—that the existence of man upon the earth was subsequent to that of many quadrupeds whose race is now extinct, and who themselves were placed there after the shell species. These facts are so incontestably established, that there is not a single naturalist who conceives it even possible that the present state of the earth should be similar to what it was formerly; and it is generally admitted that the earth has undergone several great revolutions, which have totally changed the forms of its continents.

Buffon's system, that every thing was originally produced by fire, is contradicted by positive observations; but even if it were adopted, it would still be evident that man cannot have eternally existed upon the earth.

Here, then, the first supposition is destroyed by the concurrent authority of all scientific men: let us pass to the second.

Whether the existence of man upon the earth be referred only to the last, or to the immediately antecedent revolution of the globe, and whether that revolution happened seven thousand or seventy thousand years ago, is of no importance.

In this hypothesis, we must necessarily come to one of the following conclusions; either that, from his origin, the physical organization of man has been nearly similar to what it now is, or that he originally possessed a different and more simple organization, which, by gradual and successive mutations, has attained to its present state.

If, at the moment when the earth produced him, he was an infant,—how was he nourished, until his entire developement? If he was brought forth in

poral and that it survives the body, it follows that it possesses the faculties of thinking and of feeling, without the assistance of

full stature, how could he, without education, suddenly acquire the use of the organs of sight,—learn to walk and to seek his food? It will be necessary to suppose that he was, at first, supported for a considerable time by the surrounding atmosphere; a supposition utterly unfounded, and which is wholly contradicted by analogy. On the other hand, how could the earth have formed, not only an individual in whom there is a mutual adaptation of all the constituent parts of the body; or, if it be contended that it is only a crystallization produced by the energy of some vital power or spirit, how could it form two or more individuals of different sexes, at the same time, and evidently made for each other?

We must then revert to the second hypothesis, that man in his actual state is the perfection of a more simple being; for it is impossible to imagine a third.

This hypothesis, that man was originally a gelatinous animal, who inhabited the water, and that his organs were gradually formed and developed by the influence of habits and of other circumstances, has been suggested by enlightened naturalists. It is indeed the only way in which we can explain how he obtained his place upon our planet, without having been established there by an intelligent cause.

But this mutation in the state of organized beings, by which a mollusca becomes a fish, then a phoca, next an ape, or any other animal, and lastly a man, is not only destitute of all proof, but also opposed to every notion we can derive from the study of comparative anatomy. It is a system which the most learned zoologist of modern times has triumphantly confuted, in his writings and in his lectures.

It is absolutely impossible to devise an hypothesis which will not be included in one or other of those I have discussed, without recurring to an intelligent cause. The word *nature* is only a vague expression: if nature acts for a specific and premeditated purpose, it is God: if operating blindly, it then has no separate existence, but is only to be understood in a collective sense.

Now, relinquishing all metaphysical proofs of the existence of God, which philosophers, and especially Rousseau, have developed with so much eloquence, I ask whether it be not more rational to conceive an intelligent cause, allotting to man his present station, than to suppose that a complex organization, all the parts of which are necessary to each other, has been gradually formed by the lapse of ages; and I ask also, whether they who have affirmed, for example,

external organs. I am aware that some philosophers have pretended to grant the immortality of the soul, while at the same time they attempted to maintain that it could not engender any idea without the instrumentality of outward organs; but these two propositions are so contradictory, that I can hardly believe they have been seriously united.

Let us now pass to another series of questions.

Fifth.—Does the spiritual substance act upon matter?—The reply is evident, the moment we admit that man is composed of body and mind, or of a material and an immaterial substance.

Sixth.—How are mind and matter united; and how do they act upon each other?—This question cannot be solved in the present state of our knowledge. It is sufficient to admit the fact, without troubling ourselves as to the explanation; but it should be premised, that the Theosophists believe man to be compounded of *three* substances, namely, of body, of mind, and of soul. They regard the soul as an intermediate substance, between mind and matter, by means of which a communication is established between both.

Seventh.—Do spiritual beings exist who are not united to any corporeal substance?—This question may be considered under various points of view, and the affirmative maintained upon several grounds.

First, by analogy.—As the soul exists after death, other substances of a similar nature to its own may also exist. Admitting God to be a pure spirit or intelligence, we have cause to believe that he has not limited the creation of spirits to such as are, during a limited time, united to a corporeal substance; we further have cause to presume that he has established, in the spiritual part of the creation, a variety and gradation, somewhat similar to those which he has ordained with regard to

that man had a nose in consequence of the habit formed of blowing it, have not advanced propositions which, far from supporting their system, serve only to demonstrate its absurdity.

the material part of that creation,—and that there are various classes of beings, all infinitely inferior to himself, but yet occupying an intermediate station between him and mankind. This opinion is not peculiar to the Theosophists; several philosophers have adopted it, and Bonnet of Geneva has principally maintained it in our days. Such beings, if they exist, are probably endowed with diverse faculties, inclinations, and degrees of intellect.

Secondly, by facts. Although beings of such a description cannot become immediately perceptible to our senses, because matter alone is the object of our sensations, their presence might possibly be manifested to us mediately, and from impressions which corporeal substances are incapable of producing; yet proofs of this kind can acquire value only after they have been subjected to a critical investigation, which is always neglected by those who are disposed to admit them.

Thirdly, by authority. It may be alleged that the existence of such beings has been considered, by almost all nations, as an undoubted truth; that the belief in such doctrine is connected with—and involved in—the various religious systems, and that it would be temerity to reject, unexamined, a persuasion which has been diffused in all ages throughout the whole world. We speak of our *reason*; but those men, who have thought differently from ourselves, were they not reasonable beings also?

Eighth question.—The existence of such spiritual beings once admitted, ought we to believe them capable of entering into communication with mankind?

I reply that I know nothing upon this subject. But, as the admission of all mystical doctrines depends upon the affirmative answer to this question, and as I have undertaken candidly to expound the motives of those who adopt these doctrines, I must observe,—first, that it is a belief incorporated with all religions and admitted by all nations;—secondly, that it opposes none of those principles which are derived from the observation of nature's operations and from sound metaphysical argument;

—thirdly, that the objections urged against it are in no manner decisive.

This question ought to be discussed by a careful examination of historical facts. Many persons have believed and still believe that they are in communication with spirits, which they pretend to see and hear,—but this does not prove any thing; for they who assert it, even though otherwise men of correct judgment, may perhaps labour under some nervous disorder, and therefore be the dupes of their own imagination.—The revelations which they fancy they have received cannot be admitted as a conclusive proof, unless possessed of a supernatural character; for the simple knowledge of what passes at a distance from us, or the intimation of any future event, does not positively demonstrate a revelation from spiritual beings,—as I have shewn in explaining the prescience of somnambulists.

But there are the operations of magic; that is, means which certain persons pretend to possess, of holding communication with spirits,—and which they even affirm to have disclosed in the presence of witnesses who disbelieved the power of such operations.

In order to ascertain what degree of reliance can be placed in such assertions, it would be necessary to analyze the truth of those accounts which have been given respecting this description of facts: it is not impossible to obtain that certainty, but the most difficult point is to preserve ourselves from the influence of prejudices on either side of the question. I do not recommend, to any person, that he should undertake such a species of enquiry; but justice requires that we should abstain from treating as visionaries those who inform us of their having undertaken it, before some proof is acquired of their error. Even if such a supernatural order of communication had any reality, the physical order of things would not receive any alteration from it; the whole of those concerns would take place in a separate world, and they who had not entered there could oppose only negative and consequently insufficient proofs.

Ninth.—Supposing this communication to exist, is it dependent or not on human volition? This question, like the preceding, is only to be solved by an investigation of the facts; and there are no arguments, *a priori*, which can conclude in the admission of the affirmative of it.

Tenth.—Are the spiritual beings, with whom we might enter into communication, to be considered as good or evil, and as veridical or false in what they impart? or rather, are they not of different natures, and possessed of diverse faculties and inclinations, so as to form a progressive scale, from the lowest degree of malice, to the utmost point of perfect goodness?

If this principle were admitted, the consequence is that there would be both a magic of criminal description, consisting in the communication with evil spirits, and another of a description pure and holy, consisting in conversation with good ones. It also follows that evil spirits, who from their very description must be inferior to man, are those only who could be subjected to his will and employed in administering to his passions; while the beneficent spirits would yield exclusively to his prayers, in proportion as he himself would be good and animated by pure intentions. Accordingly, in the opinion of the Theosophists, superior beings are never influenced to act but from a benevolent desire, nor do they ever communicate with man, except for the purpose of instructing him in what is really useful for him to know; they are never subservient to his curiosity, and still less to his passions; whence it follows, that they maintain an intercourse with those only who, disengaged from the transient concerns of this life, are solely occupied with the improvement of their soul, the general good of mankind, and the contemplation of a future state of existence.

It is obvious that I have no pretension to decide any of these questions. (I have no desire to enter into communication with evil spirits, and consider myself far removed from that purity which would be necessary for having intercourse with the good ones.) I merely speak of what may be, without any other ob-

ject than to shew that we ought not to reject, unexamined and with contempt, those opinions which have been adopted in all ages and in all countries, by men who, upon every other subject, were no less wise than ourselves, and who were perhaps more virtuous.

I confess that the objections hitherto made, against these opinions, have appeared to me very weak and inconclusive: they all exhibit an entire ignorance of the theory; and it would have been better simply to deny it, without any attempt at refutation. I do not admit this theory, because it is founded upon the supposition of an order of things respecting which I cannot obtain satisfactory proofs, and especially, because the facts which are adduced in its support may be explained by other causes; but, on the other hand, I cannot reject it as absurd, nor treat as madmen those who adopt it, because I do not perceive it to imply any contradiction.

I will now investigate the fundamental principles of this theory; still retaining my character, as a sceptic, in developing and in supporting them.

If we admit the immortality of the soul, we are compelled also to admit that the soul, separated from the body, may continue to possess ideas; for, thought being of its very essence, if it ceased to think, it could no longer exist. We are likewise to believe that, after this separation, it does not degenerate into a more imperfect condition,—but that, on the contrary, it acquires a greater extent of faculties; that, as its perceptions take place without the intervention of corporeal organs and without being limited to a single definite place, it perceives in a more distinct manner; that it possesses affections,—and that those affections, being undisturbed by the same passions and the same wants as in the human state, are more faultless and more subservient to truth and to reason.

We are further compelled to admit that it retains the memory of the past; for a being who had lost that remembrance would no longer be the same, and it is the connection between the past and the present which constitutes our individuality, or identity.

With respect to the particular place which it inhabits, metaphysicians will never raise any question upon that point. The idea of locality or of space being derived from our senses, and associated exclusively with that of matter, it cannot be applied to spiritual existence. It is by a phenomenon utterly inexplicable, and dependent wholly upon our Creator's will, that during the course of our present life the soul is united to a body ; and after it is disengaged from matter, it cannot be said to have any determinate location. The notions which are incorporated in all religions, respecting hell and paradise, are merely symbolical ; in order to convey sensible ideas of punishment and of reward. Hell and paradise are not any particular places, but only different conditions of existence. God fills the whole universe ; he is present every where ; our reason is capable of attaining to the contemplation of such a truth, but the testimony of our senses is inadequate to produce a conception of it.

When it is once admitted that spiritual substances survive the bodies to which they were united, and that, in their renovated existence, they retain a remembrance of the past and at least some portion of their preceding affections, there is no longer any thing absurd in a belief that they may enter into communication with living beings. The possibility of such a fact appears even to be established by fair reasoning. During life, the soul acted upon the body with which it was united ; the soul therefore can act upon matter : why should it have lost that faculty ? Besides, it is not necessary that it should have an immediate operation upon matter ; it is sufficient that it communicates its ideas to another soul, of a similar description to its own, and which therefore is capable of comprehending it.

The question, then, is not to ascertain whether such a state of things be possible, but whether there is any actual reality in it ; and this falls within the general description of questions of fact, which can never be solved by any other means than a proper investigation of the testimonies relative to it. It would be necessary therefore to examine whether any such things

as inspirations, apparitions, and revelations, have really existed. They who maintain the affirmative say, that they know it by their own experience, or else by the evidence of persons entitled to belief; and they who contend for the contrary, assert that they are unacquainted with any example of the fact: the former urge what they consider as positive proofs, and the latter oppose only such as are negative. I ask whether this be not a case in which our judgment ought to be suspended? for, as to any absurdity, I think we may now be satisfied that there exists none.

I well know that, if any one were to confess a belief in the apparition of ghosts (if we must unavoidably use this expression), he would be stamped with ridicule. But at the same time I have to remark that, among those who would thus ridicule him, there are a great many who are not very firm in their incredulity, and who even entertain some fearful apprehensions of ghosts; which is at once a more culpable absurdity and pusillanimity, than that of believing in their existence, even though it should be proved utterly false.

Let us continue. If we admit the existence of souls after the death of the individuals whom they animated, we acknowledge the existence of an infinite number of spirits who are in a state of bliss or of suffering, according to the good or ill they may have done during life. Nor is this all: when we are once persuaded that there is an order of intelligent beings which are not united to matter, we must grant that all such beings are not exactly alike; and that, besides those which for a certain time have been united to a corporeal substance, there are others of a purely intelligent nature, or what we call good and bad angels. This is not indeed a necessary consequence of the immortality of the human soul, but it certainly constitutes an analogy which renders the position extremely probable. We cannot be informed whether such spiritual beings possess the faculty of acting upon matter, nor does any thing lead us to such a conclusion; but they certainly may have communication with other beings of a nature similar to their own, and even with such as are unit-

ed to a corporeal substance, by conveying inspirations, or by imparting ideas to them. Upon this supposition, then, we behold the universe peopled with an infinity of beings possessing a nature analogous to that of the human soul, and which may hold intercourse with us.

These beings are either good or evil, or an intermediate class between the two.

The first constitute, as it were, an ascending scale of existence between God and man (without however presuming to say that any creature can be compared to its Creator), and are moved by a volition constantly directed to what is good; they know God, they love him, they ardently desire the welfare of the whole creation, they labour to promote it as much as may be within their power, and by every means which the Creator permits them to employ: their very essence is *Love*.

The second aim only at disturbing the established order, and participating their wretchedness with other intelligent creatures; they strive to seduce and deceive us; hatred and jealousy are their habitual sentiments; they have greater power than man, and their intellectual faculties are in some respects more extensive, but the goodness of the Creator has limited that power, and forbids them to hold communication except with the wicked.

The third constitute a class of beings whose intellectual faculties are also very extensive, but whose will is destitute of energy; they are subservient to the commands of any one who chooses to employ them; but they expose us to illusions, and their services are not valuable to us, unless we possess the adequate energy for directing them.

It is easily understood that, in what I have said, I merely seek to unfold a doctrine which I conceive to be that of the Theosophists: my object is not to insinuate this doctrine as if I believed it to be founded in truth, but only to shew that it is connected in all its parts, and that it is not intrinsically absurd.

Now to proceed.

From those three orders of spiritual beings, which may be still further subdivided according to their faculties and qualifications, there result three sorts of magic.

The communication with demons is always criminal. Demons obey when they are evoked; they disclose such matters to us, as we could not be informed of without their assistance; they may sometimes administer to our passions, but it is their constant aim to produce evil; and if they instruct us upon certain points, it is only to deceive us more effectually upon others. The mode in which they are evoked constitutes certain conventional signs, with which they themselves have consented to comply; the forms employed in calling them to our assistance are, it is said, known to some few who are initiated in the mystery, and may be found in certain books; they have names and a peculiar language to which they answer.

The intermediate order of spirits are equally subservient to the will of man; but as good and evil are alike indifferent to them, they never perform any real services: they seek, as it were, only the attainment of a vain gratification, and are strangers to any moral object.

The beneficent spirits are not subjected to human will; they refuse to communicate, except with those who are purified from all earthly passions; it is only with the adorers of the godhead, and with the promoters of good order and virtue, that they consent to have any social intercourse. On certain occasions, they become the messengers of God, and are employed to convey advice to men; but they willingly yield to the prayer of those whose hearts are perfectly pure, whose intentions are blameless, and whose wishes tend only to the eternal welfare of themselves and their brethren.

There exist, at the present time, societies of men who pretend to have communication with those good spirits, and to receive from them instructions and revelations. These men display wisdom and good sense in the ordinary transactions of life; they are distinguished by the rectitude of their conduct, by their

piety, and by an entire resignation to events which they consider as a part of the general dispensations of Providence. The object of their intercourse with each other is the attainment of mutual knowledge, and the invigoration of their virtuous practices; they attach no importance to the opinions which other people may entertain of their doctrine, and limit themselves, when interrogated, to confess their belief, without taking the lead in developing or enforcing their own opinions; lastly, they possess a mild and forbearing spirit of toleration, which strongly discriminates them from the character of fanatics, and they reply to sceptics who solicit from them the means of conviction:—“ *Do good,—pray to God that you may be enlightened,—do not reject the silent admonitions of your conscience,—and then you will soon think as we do.*”

I know that this disposition of mind, in the persons to whom I allude, is no reason why their ideas should be adopted; but it is a reason why we should not cast contempt upon their persons, and reproof upon their intentions; perhaps, also, it is a reason why we should abstain from treating their opinions with ridicule, before we have investigated them.

Some members of this society, the origin of which may probably be traced to high antiquity, have published writings in which two things appear reprehensible; obscurity, and an erroneous system of physics.

With respect to obscurity, they say they only write for the initiated; and whether the initiated understand them or not, is what I cannot determine.

With respect to errors on points of natural philosophy, as the greater part of those persons—though gifted with much sagacity—have neglected the fundamental study of practical science, it is not surprising that their writings are full of them. It was not upon this description of knowledge that they could have communication with superior intelligences: it must be indifferent to the latter, whether man understands the true system of the world, the true theory of electricity, of heat, of motion,

&c. ; it is alone important to them that he makes a good use of the gifts which the Creator has placed within his reach, and that he does not neglect to meditate upon a future state,—that is, upon a period when our senses will no longer expose us to illusion, and when the felicity of knowing all the secrets of the creation will perhaps constitute the reward of those who have loved truth and justice in this world.

It cannot however be disguised that when man once surrenders himself to his imagination, in order to explain what is connected with the senses and can be understood only through the medium of observation, experience and calculation, he will deviate into every kind of fanciful notions; hence, though the theory of these persons should be true, in relation to the moral order, no inferences could be drawn from it in favour of the physical one. In other respects, the perusal of those writings seems to me equally inconclusive, both for and against the theory: I speak only of such as I have read; but two things will certainly be established, which are—that all those who occupied themselves with these considerations have grounded their doctrine upon the same basis, and that they are equally animated with righteous intentions.

Let us now pursue this doctrine of the Theosophists, and observe to what issue it will lead.

According to them, spiritual beings can penetrate the future, at least to a certain extent: we shall hereafter mention how this knowledge of the future is possible, and what are its limits. Supposing them however to possess it, they can of course reveal it to many; and hence arise the predictions, the prophecies, &c. But we must ascertain how far this possibility of foreknowledge, by means of consulting spirits, would be useful to us.

The spirits who are to be consulted are either the good or the bad angels, or beings of an intermediate order.

The first, considering those things only of importance which belong to the moral world, and communicating with none but men exempt from passions and endowed with exalted virtue, will

merely reveal what is necessary to enable us to escape the seductions of vice and to improve in the path of virtue: at most, they might perhaps console an afflicted son, or friend,—sustain well founded hopes in laudable projects,—or disclose some crime that had been perpetrated, to promote the ends of justice here, and to mark the finger of Providence; but they would reply to none of those idle questions, which they who consult magicians propose with so much avidity. Hence nothing would be learned from them respecting human affairs, except where the ends of justice were involved.

Demons also may unfold the future; but, as they have no distinct perception of complicated events, they will be deceived in a multitude of circumstances. Besides, their intentions will always be to produce injury. Should they disclose to you a hidden treasure, it is only because its acquisition would precipitate you to your ruin; if they predict a distant event, it is because the knowledge of that event is attended with fatal consequences to yourself. It is happily ordained, however, that they cannot approach righteous men; and it would be a severe torment to them, were they to have any intercourse with the beneficent spirits by which the latter are constantly surrounded.

With regard to the intermediate order of spiritual beings, if they are subservient to the will of man, they can only impart limited intelligence, because their faculties are not extensive; neither can they act energetically, for they possess no determinate will in themselves. It is they, however, who predict future events, and who interpose in the greatest part of magical operations; but their predictions, though partially true, are always mingled with errors; their actions, which never spring from pure motives, cannot be directed to a useful end, unless from the exertion of human volition; and a righteous man disdains to consult them.

But there is another principle involved in the system of the Theosophists, which is, that when we hold voluntary communication with spirits, we are introduced as it were into a differ-

ent world. From that moment, evil spirits endeavour to insinuate themselves among those who are less wicked and who have not power to repel them, and their interference frequently corrupts all the operations of the latter ; it hence follows, that no advantage is to be obtained by those proceedings of magic, in which it is pretended to controul spiritual beings. According to the system of the Theosophists, those proceedings are even accompanied with the greatest danger ; for if man be deficient in energy, if he one moment suspends his attention, or if his will fluctuates, the evil spirits may inflict much injury.

Evil spirits may even obtain entire ascendancy over man, and hence the accounts we have of those persons said to be possessed with demons ; but the righteous man who, full of confidence in God, intimates his commands, can immediately drive them away⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

It is obvious that I am here developing opinions which I am far from considering as probable ones ; I merely wish to shew in what manner this theory explains those prodigies which were credited by whole nations, in less enlightened times.

With respect to the knowledge of the past and present, there is no doubt that it might be acquired by a communication with spirits ; but there is no necessity for their interposition, and I have already explained how that phenomenon can take place without its being a proof of the existence of spirits, or of our faculty of communicating with them.

If the system of the Theosophists were founded in truth, it would explain how fortune-tellers, devoid of education and intellect, as well as other ignorant persons, have uttered predictions which afterwards became verified,—and why those predictions were only partially accomplished ; why also, at the same time as the announced fact proved sufficiently true to excite astonishment, it was not altogether so accurately foretold as to satisfy us that it was perceived by an attentive and faultless intelligence. It would likewise be seen, why examples of apparitions, of revelations, &c. have been more frequent in barbarous than

in enlightened ages ; which was not only because men credulous and uninformed were more easily deceived, but because they possessed more simplicity, more confidence, and a more energetic volition;—it was also because, firmly believing in the existence of spirits, they summoned and attended to them, instead of repelling them,—and because, in those times, every one related that of which he was persuaded, without any apprehension of being styled an impostor or a visionary.

Lastly, we should discern that this theory, which admits a God who avenges and rewards,—which implies the immortality of the soul, penalties and remunerations in a future life, the necessity of worshipping the Deity, the utility of devotion towards spirits, the importance of virtue, and a belief in the fundamental truths of religion, does not proceed upon any positive system of religious faith, to the exclusion of all others.

It must however be confessed that, though many of those who have discussed the means of communicating with spirits were of different religions,—and especially though there were among them a great number of Jews, yet they who have sought to communicate with beneficent spirits only, for the purpose of improving their moral condition, were in fact Christians of different descriptions,—all of whom admitted that man, fallen by sin, was redeemed by the Messiah.

The greater part of those who have had the curiosity to peruse the writings of the Theosophists have, at first, rejected them as mere reveries ; there are only a few who have studied them, and endeavoured to make an application of their principles ; but that applications, having been made in a manner which perverted the object of the institution, produced only false results. It follows, therefore, that neither the one nor the other are in a condition to pronounce a correct opinion.

If any person should conceive that the doctrine I have attempted to explain rests upon grounds sufficiently reasonable, and leads to consequences sufficiently interesting, to induce an investigation of it, he should not in that case imagine that such

investigation would be satisfactory from a perusal of those works published by the Theosophists; for they are very obscure, besides which, they constantly assume the point which is in question.

Before enquiring into their doctrine, it would be necessary, in the first place, to ascertain whether the facts pretended to be explained are not merely imaginary. To accomplish this, it would require that we plunged into the labyrinth of all the superstitious notions and follies with which every history is filled, in order to determine whether there have really been such things as apparitions, predictions, revelations, miracles, and persons possessed with demons⁽¹¹⁵⁾; it would be proper that such enquiry were pursued by the severe criticism of a profound mind, but at the same time candid and exempt from prejudices; for if we reject a testimony, merely because it is hostile to some opinion we already entertain, we commit the illogical error of a *petitio principii*, and must fail in acquiring explicit information.

With respect to the Theosophists, the following are the conditions they require, in order to participate in the advantages they pretend to possess:

A firm confidence in God;—an entire submission to his will;—a mind disposed to the reception of truth;—an ardent desire to be informed of that truth, not from curiosity, but in order to improve in the path of virtue;—an extreme indifference for temporal concerns, so far as they relate to ourselves, yet a great application to them from the consideration that, by such means, we fulfil a necessary task, and discharge a duty imposed on us by our social condition;—an active and unlimited charity;—an extreme purity of morals;—a constant habit of prayer and meditation, so that every moment which is not occupied with the discharge of some social duty, may be wholly devoted to such prayer and meditation;—a great simplicity of heart, which leaves the soul always in a tranquil state, because the will of Providence is conspicuous in whatever occurs;—an ardent desire for the welfare of mankind;—lastly, when thus prepared by faultless conduct and by an expiation of past errors, the communi-

cation with spirits may be facilitated to us by means of initiation, the forms of which, originally established in concert with superior beings, have been transmitted by oral tradition from the remotest periods of antiquity.

It must be confessed that, if these are follics, they are at least not dangerous ones : by rendering those happy who believe in them, they induce them also to promote the happiness of others.

..... Et isti
Errori virtus nomen posuisset honestum.

Positive religions, and especially the Catholic, appear to contradict some of the foundations of this belief ; yet neither of these doctrines is excluded by the other. Among the Theosophists, there are men of every Christian persuasion ; and they all agree that every person ought to worship God according to the mode prescribed by that religion in which he has been educated, without presuming to censure the opinions of any other, relative to points of dogma. They are tolerant ; not from indifference, but from a charitable mind, and from a conviction that God will enlighten those who have a sincere desire to be guided by truth, who practice the moral precepts contained in the gospel, and who conform to the most essential of all those precepts,—that of loving God above all, and our neighbour as ourself.

All Theosophists consider the Bible as an inspired book, and the gospel as a code delivered by God to man ;—they believe that the latter was created perfectly good, but free, and that he has fallen from his primitive condition in consequence of the aberrations of his will and the abuse of his liberty ; that this life is a state of probation, in which we are to make the necessary efforts to return to that original state from which we have descended, and that the Redeemer came upon earth for the purpose of recalling erring men into the true path, and to absolve them from the proscription which they had incurred.

With regard to celestial intelligences, those of an inferior order were originally exempt from contamination ; it was by the evil use of their faculties, and of their liberty, that they be-

came perverted and have forfeited that happy state to which they were destined. This explanation is not only adopted in the Christian Church, as deduced from scripture, but is also incorporated with the ancient religions of Asia.

I have already observed, that many of these opinions are necessarily connected, while some others are independent of those with which they have been associated.

Thus, the possibility of departed souls appearing to us is a necessary consequence of their immortality, though the reality of the fact could be proved only by historical testimonies. The existence of several orders of spiritual beings is founded merely upon analogy, and a correspondence with those beings cannot be proved otherwise than by experience; their existence however would not be the less probable, in the absence of all decisive experiment, but their intercourse with mankind would constitute nothing more than a religious tenet. The principle, that man has fallen from a higher state, is derived only from metaphysical considerations, which have been ably developed by several philosophers, and among others by Pascal.

Enough has now been said as to the principles upon which the doctrine of the Theosophists is founded. Let us next examine a few questions connected with them, and in the first place that of foreknowledge, which led to the present discussion.

It is pretended, say the antagonists of this doctrine, that spiritual beings can penetrate the future; but the future has no existence;—how then can it possibly be foreseen?

The future can be known only by one of two ways; either by an immediate perception of an event that is destined to take place, or by an extremely rapid combination of the different causes which may produce it. I shall return to a consideration of the former method, but have first to explain the latter, because it is analogous to that which we habitually employ in forming our judgments. I here venture to illustrate my meaning by a simile.

Suppose I am standing on the banks of a river, over which

there is a bridge of several arches. I perceive, at as great a distance as my eye can discern objects, a boat coming towards this bridge; and I say that this boat will pass through the third arch, because I observe its direction, together with that of the current and the motion which the boatmen give to their oars. This foreknowledge is very simple; it is not however infallible, but the chances of our being deceived will be fewer, in proportion as we are more exercised in the act of estimating such results, and as we possess a more accurate eye.

Spiritual intelligences being able to form millions of combinations, and to perceive at one glance millions of causes, while man can observe only a small number, it follows that they can foresee more distant events, by their knowledge of the complicated causes which are preparatory of them. Compare the optic powers of a person who is short-sighted, with those of a man who can distinguish trees at the very edge of the horizon, or with those powers when the eye is assisted by a telescope; and yet you will have only an imperfect idea of the superiority possessed by a celestial over a human intelligence.

Predictions cannot attain to infallibility; because not only some circumstances may escape notice, but also because man, by the exercise of his free will, may invert the natural order upon which the calculation has been founded: these cases however are rare, and influence little more than certain circumstances of the event foretold.

With respect to immediate vision, or intuitive knowledge of a future event, I am aware that numerous examples are adduced upon that subject; but the fact is so unlikely, that, before endeavouring to explain it, we ought to ascertain whether those examples be sufficiently authenticated. Now, supposing them to be so, they might be argued upon in the following manner:

The idea of space, and that of time, are inseparable from all other ideas; but they possess reality in our estimation, only because we are united to matter and endowed with senses.

Time perhaps has no existence for God, who at a single glance

comprehends the past, the present and the future, as he also perceives every point contained in the universe.

If, according to Kant, the ideas of time and of space originate only in our mode of considering objects ; if they be merely the necessary conditions annexed to our intellectual operations,—the original and virtual forms of our sentient faculty,—the offspring of our *Sensorium*, as colours are the offspring of our organ of sight,—then celestial intelligences, who discern objects independently of these forms, must be able to perceive the future, as they do both the past and the present. The only difficulty, for them, will consist in referring the objects of their perceptions to such or such an æra ; and hence the reason why, among the many predictions which have been related, so few are remarked as being applicable to any determinate period specified by a date, or are intelligible before the event ; while a great many more are mentioned, in which the coincidence of several distinct events is clearly pointed out.

After all, if the possibility of foreknowledge were even to be adopted, its accuracy (as I have already observed) must always remain a matter of doubt ; because, intelligences of all kind being limited in their extent, some circumstances may inevitably escape. I could dilate copiously upon this subject, but I confine myself to replying to the strongest objection that can be urged against the system of the Theosophists ; and as this is an objection which equally applies to the Christian religion, we have an additional motive for not suffering it to be silently passed by.

This system, it is said, supposes that God and all spiritual intelligences are occupied with the inhabitants of the earth, as if this were the principal object of the creation.—But what is the Earth ? only a very small part of our planetary system, which itself is merely a speck in the whole system of the universe.—There are planets greater than the earth, and which also revolve round the sun.—The stars are so many suns, round which probably other planets revolve ; these stars are innumerable ; and it is not merely to adorn the vault of heaven, or to delight the gaze of man, that

they occupy the immensity of space; for those which we can perceive by the naked eye are very few, in comparison of what we discover with the aid of telescopes, and doubtless there are an infinitely greater number of stars which escape the power of our best instruments.—Is it reasonable, then, to suppose that the earth alone is inhabited by sentient beings?

Certainly not;—nor is the idea of a plurality of worlds rejected by religion. God is infinite in his attributes: a simple atom is equally visible to him as the whole universe. The multitude of objects may appear confused, to beings of a limited intelligence, but not to that power which comprehends the whole in its immensity. God occupies himself with man, whom he has created, as if man were the sole object of his creation. We are ignorant of the nature and destiny of those beings who inhabit other planets; they are perhaps governed by different laws, nor can we have any intercourse with them. Supposing the number of intelligent beings diffused throughout the universe to be infinite, God would listen no less to the prayer of a virtuous man, nor omit to punish the slightest infraction of the laws of justice. The smallest grain of matter is subjected to attraction, the same as Saturn or Jupiter, and all sentient creatures are subservient to the action of the Creator, the same as every grain of matter is to the action of the sun; there is nothing which can be considered small in reference to his sight, who beholds the parts as distinctly as the whole, who hears at the same moment all his creatures, and a single act of whom involves all that exists. The maxim of the Epicureans, that God cannot bestow his attention upon individuals, is a blasphemy, or rather its origin may be traced to their utter ignorance of the nature of God.

I shall not here discuss the subject of the origin of evil; so many volumes have been already written upon it, that nothing new can be added. All philosophers agree that the Creator, having made man a free agent, could not divest him of the faculty of acting meritoriously or otherwise. I should observe, that when we call the power of God *infinite*, such expression is neces-

sarily to be understood as applying to that power compared with what is possessed by any of his creatures, and not to that power itself. God has chosen the best of all possible worlds, but he could not have created one in which no evil should exist. These discussions, however, are beyond the reach of human intellect which cannot penetrafe the essence of things, nor unveil the mystery of the creation and the aim of the Creator. Man knows that, in order to fulfil his destiny, he should adore his Creator, and do to his brethren all the good in his power: that knowledge is sufficient, for it comprehends the whole law.

The practices of the Theosophists have for their object to communicate with spirits disengaged from matter, and ultimately to attain a higher degree of perfection. Whether the means which they pretend to employ for this purpose be real, or only delusive, is a question which can best be answered by those who are acquainted with those persons, and who, after having consulted them, have candidly pursued their enquiries. I am satisfied with having shewn that their theory is not altogether senseless, or dangerous, and that the accusation of fanaticism applied to them was calumnious.

I have now to address those who incline towards a belief in the reality of an occult philosophy; and there are, in the world, a greater number of persons thus disposed than is imagined. They dare not confess it;—but observe with what attention they listen to those accounts which tend to prove it;—see how many people every day beset the doors of fortune-tellers. There are persons of this description, in Paris, who keep a public office, who give audiences, and where it is necessary to inscribe your name for obtaining admittance in regular rotation: every morning, carriages are to be seen, conveying thither females of the greatest respectability, and men whom a superstitious curiosity impels to what they would blush to confess. Observe also how many there are who tell fortunes at cards, explain dreams, believe in prognostics, &c. Many, likewise, secretly seek the acquaintance of men who employ magical operations; they merely wish, according to their

own declarations, to see what it is; they are confident in their fortitude, and are sure that they will not be deluded by charms. Others, lastly, visit those who are addicted to the practices of theurgy, and solicit them to exhibit something marvellous, declaring that their only desire is to be convinced, as a guide for their future conduct.

I wish to address to these three classes of persons a few observations, which may deter them from an imprudent step; whether the possibility of discovering the future, and of communicating with spirits, be admitted or not.

To the first, I would say: You are going to consult a prophet, but can expect from him no useful information. Perhaps you will pretend to be guided by a motive of curiosity only, and will add that you do not mean to grant any confidence to his predictions. It may be so, and possibly you can answer for yourself at the present moment. But, supposing a succession of events to be foretold, the last of which should be of a fatal description, and that the first part of the prediction should happen by mere chance to be accomplished: in that case, whatever may be the energy of your mind, a day will come when, forcibly struck with that partial accomplishment, you will be filled with terror on contemplating the remainder of the prophecy;—that idea will possess you in spite of yourself,—it will constitute a permanent idea,—and this will expose you to imminent danger, if ever you were seized with any serious illness under such circumstances.

With respect to those who would witness magical operations and the evocation of spirits, in order to be convinced, I reply (always supposing the reality of such facts) that those operations can succeed only with evil spirits, or those of the intermediate order;—that the former endeavour to insinuate themselves among the latter, which interference it is very difficult to avoid;—that, if they communicate with you, they will strive to precipitate you into evil, and that there is no example of any person who became thus convinced of the reality of a supernatural order of things,

who conducted himself in such a manner as to merit the rewards of a future life : the same spirits which consent to satisfy your curiosity, will know how to corrupt your good intentions.

There remain those who, convinced as to the existence of a spiritual world and the possibility of holding converse with pure intelligences, wish to be informed respecting the means of that correspondence, and seek for those persons who can give such information. Though I do not participate in their opinions, I cannot wholly condemn their anxiety ;—yet I must inform them that, among true Theosophists, they will not find one who will consent to satisfy their curiosity and to initiate them without previous preparation. To whomsoever they may address themselves for that purpose, the answer will be : “ Renounce your passions and your evil habits ;—expiate your past errors ;—be occupied with nothing else than doing good ;—pray, and render yourself worthy of being enlightened.” Among those who followed that advice (if the doctrine of the Theosophists be true), some would at a future day be initiated ; but this would take place only when they desired it no longer from curiosity, but as the means of attaining to a state of greater moral purity. With respect to those who might not attain that perfection, their fruitless attempt would leave them no just cause of regret, because they would have proceeded in the path of virtue ; which path, while it assuredly leads to felicity in another life, is commonly productive of the greater happiness in this, as our passions are productive of more injury to ourselves, than we can receive either from men or things. If they who pursue this enquiry should ultimately discover that the notions entertained by the Theosophists are merely fanciful, they will learn at the same time to preserve a due regard for the character of a class of men who find, even in a delusive theory, motives of consolation for the sorrows of life, and also motives which induce them to virtuous practices.

It remains for me to say a few words respecting the influence which mystical doctrines may have on the mind, when they are associated with various branches of human knowledge.

I will suppose that an enlightened man adopts, after proper enquiry, the doctrine of the Theosophists; it will no less prove to be a dangerous rock, which he should the more carefully avoid, as several Theosophists have already split upon it,—in seeking to explain natural phenomena by this mystical theory.

Admitting the reality of an intellectual world, it would possess no common relation with the physical one. Spiritual beings may act upon our soul,—and as this re-acts upon our body, they may thus exert an influence on our habits and even on our health; but they have no power over other beings who are only material. The latter are subjected to invariable laws, which can be discovered by no other means than observation, experience, and calculation.

Thus, if a man prepossessed with those mystical notions, which have been the subject of our discussion, will reason accurately, he will never enquire by means of such a theory for the explanation of any natural phenomenon. If he wishes to account for phenomena of this kind, it is exclusively in the schools of mathematicians, of astronomers, of naturalists, and of chemists, that he can expect to meet with information. He will abstain therefore from transferring to physical objects the modifications of understanding,—from employing an abstruse language,—and from attributing to certain expressions, when applied to those physical objects, the significations usually given to similar expressions relative to spiritual existences. Hence the words *influence*, *affinity*, *sympathy*, *harmony* and *power*, will be restricted to the sense attached to them by naturalists, and never be employed in accounting for any natural phenomenon.

If the men of whom I speak (and I have known such who observed that prudent caution) are the dupes of any illusion, it will exercise no influence upon their judgment, in whatever relates to the phenomena and laws of nature; their conversation and their writings will never deviate from the principles of sound natural philosophy, nor from explanations which are founded upon such observations and experiments as every one can verify.

I am aware that, among men who surrendered themselves to

occult philosophy, there have been adepts who believed in the philosophers' stone,—in a universal panacea, &c. Such errors, the offspring of a disturbed imagination, and promoted by sordid interest or by the grossest ignorance, have always been distinct from the doctrine of the Theosophists, who, viewing such research as unworthy of a wise man's consideration, have disdained to enter upon it, even though it might not be wholly destitute of reality.

I have thus developed the doctrine of the Theosophists, as explicitly as possible, from the imperfect information which could be obtained. I have assumed a sceptical form of reasoning, in order to give full weight to the arguments of those who adopt it, and also to the objections of those who oppose it; I have presented a concatenation of all the parts of this doctrine, discriminating the propositions which are founded only upon metaphysical opinions, from those that rest upon facts which may be either received or rejected after due examination; I have, lastly, shewn both the intent and the consequences of this doctrine. The initiated will doubtless discover that I have not mentioned every thing that could be said respecting it,—which may be the case; but it is sufficient that I have advanced nothing which is false, nor attributed to them any opinions contrary to those which they really maintain. If they conceive it useful, that men who are candid in their enquiries after truth should be further enlightened, it will be for them to develope their principles in a methodical work, such as every attentive reader may clearly comprehend*.

* In the outline which I have traced of the doctrine of the Theosophists, I have limited myself to the possibility of an intercourse between the spiritual and the physical worlds. I have said nothing of their opinions concerning the explanation of mysteries,—the figurative sense of scripture, of which they believe themselves to possess the key,—the physical phenomena considered as an image of those which take place in the spiritual world,—the language of spirits,—the ceremonies and sacrifices of the ancient law, &c. These details are foreign to the end which I proposed to myself. Besides it may be remarked, with reference to those various topics, that each individual entertains his own peculiar opinions respecting them, and that none appear to have a more solid foundation than the others.

Meanwhile, and until a work of this description shall appear, I ought to mention what are, with respect to myself, the results of the discussion into which I have entered. I do not propose them as truths, but as opinions which I cannot renounce until new motives fall under my consideration. These results are :

First.—That the doctrine of the Theosophists is in no manner proved.

Secondly.—That, although it be not proved, it is neither intrinsically absurd nor contrary to what reason induces us to believe.

Thirdly.—That, if it were even to be true, such knowledge would be unnecessary to man ; because, in order to be instructed, we must commence by the practice of virtue, and being once virtuous, we already enjoy all the advantages which that knowledge could confer.

Fourthly.—That prudence dictates we should not employ our time in examining the various foundations of that doctrine, because the marvellous which accompanies it may exalt the imagination, and may deter us from the pursuit of more certain and more useful objects of study.

Fifthly.—That, when neglecting to study this doctrine, we have no right to despise it, and still less to despise those by whom it is professed, and who find in it a basis upon which to erect principles of the purest morality, together with motives of resignation to every misfortune of life.

Sixthly.—That this doctrine is wholly unconnected with that of Magnetism ; that the knowledge of Magnetism disposes us even to reject all such doctrines, in consequence of perceiving, in the magnetical action, a natural cause productive of the greater part of those phenomena which have induced men to adopt an occult system of philosophy*.

* I know but one fundamental principle which belongs equally to the mystical doctrines and to the theory of Magnetism ; it is that of the faculty possessed by man, of acting upon his fellow-creatures by the influence of volition. I could cite several passages from Jacob Behmen, from Swedenborg, and from St. Martin, where that power of volition is clearly expressed. If philosophers

Seventhly and lastly.—That even if we believed in the existence of an intellectual world,—also in the intercourse between those beings with which it is inhabited and the human soul, that opinion should have no influence upon our judgments relative to the phenomena belonging to the physical world, because the one and the other are distinct, and not governed by similar laws.

CHAPTER XIII.

Conclusion of the first part.

I HAVE now traced the history of the discovery of Magnetism ; I have endeavoured to discriminate the truly useful part of what it comprehends, from the erroneous notions which enthusiasm and credulity have unfortunately blended with that doctrine ; I have shewn that the collection of facts, upon which it rests, is in no respect opposed to the principles inculcated into our minds by the study of natural sciences ; I have indicated the means of obtaining conviction ; I have described the processes which appear to me most expedient ; I have pointed out how Magnetism can be applied to relieve the afflicted and to cure dis-
had acknowledged that important truth, in the first instance, they would have limited their endeavours to draw such inferences from it as would have been rational in themselves and easily corroborated by daily experience, and to discover the instrument employed by the will : thus they would have avoided the errors and follies into which both theosophists and magnetisers have been equally betrayed.

The members of the Exegetic society of Stockholm, together with those who embraced their opinions, and generally all whom I have described under the denomination of *spiritualists*, have done much injury to the doctrine of Magnetism, by holding it forth in support of their mystical notions, and by citing as oracular the nonsense uttered by their somnambulists. Often, indeed, the effects which they produced upon their patients have been more hurtful than beneficial, because Magnetism disturbs harmony instead of restoring it when it is directed in such a manner as to excite the imagination.

cases, the degree of confidence to which it is entitled, and the inconveniences that may arise from an imprudent use of it. I have developed the phenomena of Somnambulism,—not with a view to direct the attention more particularly than is necessary upon that singular crisis, nor to induce any person eagerly to attempt its production,—but in order that nature's salutary operations may not be interrupted, nor its intent defeated, when that crisis happens to take place (as it were) spontaneously. I have proved that the theory of Magnetism is absolutely foreign to all mystical doctrines; and that the information we possess, relative to those crises which it has exhibited in our days, tends to refer to natural causes an immense number of marvellous facts which have been the occasion of entertaining all kind of superstitious notions. I might stop here; but I think it will be useful to recur to the greater part of those topics,—whether as a reply to objections, to confute the exaggerations of enthusiasm, or to point out the sources whence more comprehensive information can be derived; and this is the task which I propose to accomplish in the second part of this work.

It may be useful to close this first part with a brief recapitulation of what I have suggested, as most important to those who, without participating in any discussion upon the subject, might be desirous of exerting their magnetical powers to beneficent purposes.

When visiting a patient, employ, to magnetise him, the most simple processes, such as will scarcely excite attention and cannot strike his imagination; do not trouble yourself concerning the sensations he may experience, or the phenomena which your action may produce; but surrender yourself entirely to the desire and hope of curing him, and then you will soon be convinced of your actually doing him good.

If it were possible that, during more than five and twenty years in which I have practised Magnetism, I should have been the dupe of a constant illusion; that the considerable number of persons whom I have been conscious of having either cured or

relieved, according even to their own declarations, should have experienced no other benefit than what resulted from the effect of imagination or by mere chance; that the phenomena, which I have so frequently witnessed, arose from other causes than those to which I ascribed them; that all who have made experiments, with the same success as myself, should have been betrayed into a similar error; lastly, if Magnetism were nothing better than a chimerical notion, still it would at least not be an injurious one,—and, in certain individuals, the confidence they entertain may produce a temporary relief and promote some natural and salutary crisis. Why then not employ this illusion which, like many others, may be calculated to assuage human sufferings? It should not be from any fear of exciting the imagination. To hold the hand of a patient; to fix your attention solely upon himself; to perform slight frictions, are not such processes as are likely to excite astonishment or to produce disorder in his ideas. If it were indispensable, on such occasions, to reject every medical assistance or advice, there might then be some danger; but that is not the case, as we can act without neglecting any of those other remedies the utility of which has been ascertained by experience. We nevertheless yield to the noble sentiment of compassion; we fortify, in our minds, that of benevolence which leads us to assist our fellow-creatures; we manifest to a suffering person a tender concern and affection, which distracts his attention from the pain he endures; and if we flatter ourselves with the hope of relieving him, we derive a pleasing satisfaction from that idea. Should it even be supposed that all this is mere delusion, there would be reason to confess, that errors may sometimes be useful, both in their principle and their consequences.

I repeat therefore the recommendation I have made to mothers of families, at the commencement of this work. Let them be persuaded that they are endowed with the faculty of preserving that life which they have given, and that nature has planted in their soul those sentiments and inclinations which greatly faci-

hate the exercise of that faculty. When they behold their children in a suffering state, no other idea can possibly disturb their maternal care and attention; they would wish to procure relief, even at the expence of their own health; their eyes are incessantly-fixed upon the objects of their solicitude; they fold them in their arms, and overwhelm them with caresses: they only require to be informed that these very acts, which spring spontaneously from their affection for their children, may often be the means of curing them, if united with *direct intention* and *confidence*.

Lastly I invite all enlightened men, who have leisure and opportunity of seeing the afflicted, to employ Magnetism without seeking for wonders,—without troubling themselves with objections, and without meditating upon theories. No doubt that the mind delights in contemplating phenomena before unobserved, and in penetrating the secrets of nature; but the felicity of relieving any suffering individual is a hundred times greater than all this. When I compare the rapture which has been excited in me by the apparent miracles of somnambulism, with the satisfaction I have experienced when acute pains were first relieved and soon after wholly removed through my care; when I remember that I have cheerfully exchanged all the pleasures of society for attending, during six consecutive months, to the cure of a dropsical patient, I can solemnly declare that the consciousness of doing good surpasses every other gratification. Our own natural sentiments are sufficient to persuade us of this truth; but the habitual practice of Magnetism daily proves it by experience, and hence it particularly deserves attention, because it is favourable also to purposes of morality.

END OF THE FIRST PART.







